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# THE EVOLUTION OF LOVE

By  
EMORY MILLER

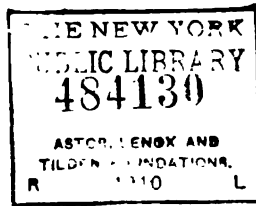


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## GLOSSARY OF CERTAIN TERMS, AS USED IN THIS BOOK

- Absolute.* Without necessary relation; a self-sufficient unit.
- Absolute truth.* The self-consciousness of the Infinite Being; the infinite ideal.
- Abstraction.* Thought, as disengaged from realities.
- Action.* The exercise of energy; force.
- Actualize.* To enact; to practically fill out or copy an ideal, plan, or purpose; to realize.
- Altruism.* Objective action, especially benevolence toward others.
- Anthropomorphism.* Pictured or imaginary conception of a spiritual being as a formal organism.
- Attention.* Voluntarily directing thought to any object.
- Being.* Actual existence.
- Condition.* A force, relation, fact, or circumstance which supports, limits, or modifies any act, person, or thing.
- Conditioned.* The state of being limited, modified, or dependent.
- Conscience.* The perception of moral authority.
- Conscious.* Self-perceiving.
- Consciousness.* The fact of self-perception.
- Conscious self-determination.* Consciousness of intention in one's own action affecting his nature or character.
- Determination.* To enact, make, modify.
- Egoism.* Concerning one's self.
- Finite.* Limited, dependent.
- Ideal.* A conception built up of ideas, or a conception of a perfect thing.
- Ideal being.* A mental conception of a perfect being.
- Implications.* Unperceived facts, relations, or inferences involved with accepted knowledge.
- Independent.* Self-existent, self-determined, unconditioned.
- Infinite.* Without limitation; perfect freedom.
- Involution.* Infolding or intermingling of contents.
- Nescience.* Denial of knowledge other than of phenomena.
- Ontology.* The science of being.

*Perfect being.* Ideal being realized in perfect action.

*Person.* A being who determines his own nature or character in any or all respects.

*Personality.* The power of self-determination.

*Posit.* To lay down, place, or establish conditions, propositions, or affirmations.

*Reality, or, the real.* That which is enacted, as distinguished from what is only thought or planned.

*Realize.* To enact, actualize, make.

*Self-consciousness.* One's knowledge of his susceptibilities and powers.

*Self-determination.* Making or modifying one's own nature or character.

*Selfishness.* Chief devotion to himself on the part of a dependent being.

*Self-love.* Devotement to being or becoming one's best possible self.

*Self-perception.* The mind's perception of its own actions; consciousness.

*Thing.* 1. An actual object; 2. A wholly limited or dependent object.

*Thought.* 1. A perception, conception, idea; 2. Cognition, knowing as distinguished from doing.

*Unconditioned.* Action or being to which means, conditions, or instrumentalities are unnecessary.

## PREFACE

AMONG the facts which justify publishing a revised edition of this work the following may be mentioned: First, the large number of persons who have professed to have gained specific and long-needed help from the first edition suggests there may be many others who will be similarly benefited. Secondly, the uniform and almost sole objection to the book, made by readers and reviewers, has been that its "too closely packed and condensed" argumentation makes it "hard to read." The objection demands something to facilitate the reader's grasp of its important though subtle themes. This revision seeks to supply this need by expanding over-compact statements and more explicitly indicating the relation betwixt chapters. Thirdly, besides the high appreciation which the work has received by its careful readers in general the author has derived special encouragement from the very high estimate placed upon it by distinguished thinkers and critics, among whom have been Gladstone, Iverach, and Watkinson, in Great Britain; Drs. Spaulding, Bowne, and Magoun, and Bishops Hamilton and Fowler, in America; with Drs. Stuntz and Smith, in Asiatic missions. Fourthly, from the many requests we have received to publish a revised edition, from persons whose judgment we cannot but profoundly respect, we are convinced that the demand for the work, though not wide, will be continuous, and, perhaps, will increase with the progress of thought.

This book was originally written as the author's answer to himself of questions which had been shirked, slurred over, or inadequately answered by every writer and

speaker he had read or heard on these themes. It pertains to the foundation convictions; asks, and aims to answer, the question, What must I think?

In the plan of the work the Introduction seeks a clear understanding of what is meant by the question, What is truth? and how it may be validly answered; and, What are legitimate bounds of human inquiry? This leads to the view that whatever is necessarily implied in the fact of being must be truth; hence, Part First is an inquiry into the "Implications of Being."

In this inquiry it appears that the fact of existence, or being, is the first fact concerning which the question is met, What must I think? And as perception is our first mental act our first query is, What is our perception of being? Hence, our first chapter is entitled "Being, as Perceived."

As the next mental step following perception, in the process of knowing, is forming a conception, or idea, of things which we have perceived, we proceed in the second chapter to discriminate what conception of being we must form; or, rather, what conception naturally or necessarily arises upon the mind from our perception of being. Therefore Chapter II is given the title, "Being, as Conceived."

Chapter III, entitled "Being, as Conditioned," is mainly a continuation of the second chapter, but more in detail, and closes with a summing-up in twenty-three propositions giving a more full and rounded statement of our conception of being. These three chapters involve what the author regards as the only philosophy of which he is aware that is successful in the sense that it clearly discriminates the "primary unit" which, in its evolution, expands into a valid system which covers and accounts for all variety.

Part Second, "Implications of Love," takes up love which in Part First appears as *the nature of the "primary unit" and exhibits it as the originating and conditioning force which in its evolution is working out the problem of a personal universe, free, harmonious, and good.*

While Part First involves a system of ontology (science of being), Part Second discloses a system of cosmology (theory of the world), together constituting a system of evolution, or constructive philosophy, which regards systems of physical evolution as merely incidental, whether true or false, and renders theodicy (vindication of God) superfluous. Of course, psychology and natural science are recognized and employed in the work by way of analysis or illustration, and the structural sciences, theology and ethics, are affected by its conclusions. The Bible, though quoted occasionally by way of apt expression or illustration, is not employed in the argument.





## INTRODUCTION

**SUPERSTITION, OPINION, DISCRIMINATION!** Three epochal words! The first has had its day, the second its noon, the dawn of discrimination is upon us. The spirit of our day indulges no remark with more complacency than this: "The age of superstition is past." Though a doubt may exist as to whether superstition is vanquished or has only changed its forms, we may safely believe it broken in some departments of life and largely superseded in others. But it may be well to observe what has taken its place as the mental temper in modern culture. But slight inspection is needed to convince us that the ground once held by superstition is now occupied by partisan opinion. Just as in ancient days a few tall spirits discerned great, dominating truths, set in a narrow horizon of intelligence, so now comparatively few discriminate the solid ground of verified accuracy from the quagmire and quicksands of opinion. Not unfrequently we hear the most valid truths questioned, and the crudest opinions positively asserted; and how rarely found is he who, having ascertained real knowledge in one department of thought, is wise enough to refrain from oracular speech in other, though unstudied, departments. It is much more easy to a lazy, dishonest, or cowardly man to accept as knowledge the assertion of smart or ponderous opinion than to undergo a painstaking ascertainment of truth. The honesty required in the search for truth seems as rare a quality now as in the days when superstition held the place now occupied by flippant opinion.

Yes, the domination of superstition is past, the reign of opinion is upon us; when will the age of discrimina-

tion fully come? That it will come we have not the slightest doubt; that it has more representatives now than in any former period is quite certain. Perhaps opinion is the transition from superstition to accuracy. Moral honesty has long been held as the rightful rule in action; when it becomes the rule in thinking men will demand as thorough conscientiousness in forming, as in carrying out, an opinion. Then the badge of intelligence will be, not information, but discrimination. Men will not ask, "How much does he know?" but, "How well does he know?" Society will then be possessed of the spirit of accuracy as now of that of novelty.

How little honesty there is in the world is seen in that but few, comparatively, "hold fast that which is good," while almost none "prove all things." It is only half honest to adhere firmly to one's belief; the other and better half is to struggle that our beliefs be correct. To this lower stratum of honesty comparatively few dig down. The surface stratum is sufficient for popular commendation.

This apotheosis of opinion in our day seems a repetition of the state of things among the Greeks when Socrates arose in mighty protest against its frivolity, in the time of the Sophists. Then, as now, there had been the failure of materialistic philosophy; then, as now, a reaction from superstition; then, as now, the "popular rage" was a show of information, readiness to talk on the surface of any subject; then, as now, truth, justice, and good were regarded as mere conventionalities, while reality was thought to be in proportion to smartness of individual opinion. No better description of many modern leaders of popular opinion can be given than Schwegler's account of the Greek Sophists. He says:

"The Greek Sophists, like the French Illuminati of the

last century, displayed an encyclopedic universality of knowledge. Their relation to the cultivated public, their striving after popularity, notoriety, and pecuniary emolument suggests the inference that their studies and activities were, for the most part, directed and determined, not by any objective scientific interest, but by external considerations. Wandering from town to town, announcing themselves as thinkers by profession, and looking in all their operations mainly to good pay and for favor of the rich, they naturally chose those questions of general interest and public advantage, though at times also the private fancies of certain men, as the objects of their discourse. Their principal strength, therefore, lay much more in formal quickness, in subjective displays of readiness of wit, in the art of being able to rhetorize, than in positive knowledge. Their only instruction in morals consisted in disputatious word-catching or in hollow rhetorical show; and even when their information rose to polymathy, mere phrasing on the subjects remained the main point. We cannot wonder that they descended in this respect to that empty external trickery which Plato, in the *Phædrus*, subjects to so keen a criticism, and specially because of its want of seriousness and principle.”

Recognizing the retirement of superstition and opinion, and the advent of discrimination, we recognize that one of the first suggestions made by this ruling word is the correct use of tests of truth. Beliefs of all thoughtful times have usually been cast in the same generic forms, five in number. These five forms have been termed philosophies.

In the railroad switching grounds there is a man whose duty it is to move a bar of iron the space of three or four inches. By this means he directs one train upon its course to San Francisco, another toward New Orleans, another

to the Atlantic seaboard. Thus the philosopher operates the switch in the mental world, and largely determines the course of thought throughout the network of science, literature, politics, law, morals, and manners. A mistake at the switch means wreck to the train. Failure and corruption of manners, morals, and government, with their calamitous results, are largely due to inaccuracies of thought in the domain of philosophy.

The differences between the five forms of philosophic systems depend upon what each takes as a test of truth. It is, therefore, of no avail to advocate one system of belief or oppose another unless a reliable test of truth is ascertained. If I take the senses as the sole test of truth I must become a materialist, sensationalist, or positivist, with Spinoza, Mill, and Comte. If I take the intuitional consciousness or feelings as the only test of truth I must become a mystic with Böhme and Schelling. If, again, the logical consciousness be my only test, then, with Berkeley or Fichte, I must discredit the reality of all external things and be an idealist. Or as an eclectic I may apply the tests of "progressive common sense" and thus join hands with Maine de Biran, Cousin, and Jouffroy. Or, finally, I may reject them all and be a skeptic with Pyrrho in ancient, Hume and De Maistre in modern times. These old schools of philosophy have wrangled for centuries, but the only outcome is to make belief a matter of choice; and that is a scandal upon philosophy. The adopting one class of truth-tests to the exclusion of others is the vitiating germ of each system. But may we not find valid tests of truth upon which to found true "all-round" philosophy and abiding knowledge?

That self-evidence is the ultimate test of truth goes almost without saying. But the validity of the means by which self-evidence is recognized is the disturbing

question. When a thing is seen to be self-evident we cannot ignore its truth without conscious mental or moral degradation. But how may we practically come at things so that their self-evidence may appear? The means by which self-evidence is recognized are, then, the

*Practical Tests of Truth.*—We may safely say that the organ or faculty through which knowledge is gained is, in a general way, the test of the correctness of that knowledge. The difference in sounds can be decided not by the eye, but by the ear. The sense of smell cannot distinguish colors; this must be done by the eye. In like manner the correctness of perceptions and relations must be tested by the reason; and the facts of personal identity, freedom, and moral sense can only be known through the intuitional consciousness.

Then, we say that the practical tests of truth are of two classes, generally termed *consciousness* and *the senses*—when applied in departments of knowledge in which, severally, they are the organs of knowing; not otherwise. The old wrangle of materialism, for example, arose from taking the senses as the only test of truth; and because personal identity, free will, moral obligation, or God could not be tested by the senses these truths were questioned or denied. This is the whole gist of the infidelity often vented by rhetoricians and secondhand thinkers who do not discriminate sufficiently to know what is the pother. The idealists, on the other hand, taking the logical consciousness as the only test of truth, could not affirm objects of sense. Thus these two schools shoved each other out of existence. Each denied the existence of what the other was sure.

*Right application of truth-tests* is the way of escape from these indeterminate systems. It consists in (1) the application of the testimony of the senses in verifying

knowledge externally derived; (2) the test of consciousness in mental or spiritual phenomena; (3) the agreement or mutual corroboration of these where both classes of phenomena are concerned.

Admitting this to be a true putting of the case, how can I be certain that these tests are valid in their respective spheres? We answer: 1. Only by their use, as such, can we acquire knowledge. 2. They are felt and acted upon as necessary and final by all men. 3. Without them there can be no progress. Arts, industries, and sciences could never have been achieved except by this use of them. The progress of the world has been in spite of the old philosophies, which abused these tests by misapplication. Instinctively, or as a matter of course, men accept truth as it appears self-evident—through the senses on the physical side, or to the inner consciousness on the spiritual side; and where self-evidence arises from mutual corroboration of both sides the result is felt to be demonstration. If disagreement arise, as between these poles of truth, it simply leads to the detection of inaccuracy in the perception of original facts.

But now comes up the question, Are these criteria of knowledge real? That is to say, these tests decide what is true to us, but if we were otherwise constructed might not truth be other than what we find it to be? Or, in other words, how can we know that what conforms to our consciousness and sense is truth, independent of our structure? We answer: Sciences, arts, and industries projected and carried out in accordance with these tests, yet having for their subject-matter things and forces outside and independent of our structure, nevertheless result successfully; that is, bring about progress. Substantial progress is a practical test of tests. The law of gravitation and our consciousness of mathematical rela-

tions are true among the stars. A few years ago the planet Uranus was supposed to bound the solar system with his orbit, but his wabblings were eccentric beyond what, according to the law of gravitation, could be accounted for by the influence of known bodies. Hence astronomers believed there must be some large unknown body hovering beyond Uranus and thus affecting him. No telescope, however, had as yet discovered such disturbing force. Whereupon Leverrier set about reducing by mathematical calculation the excesses of Uranus to definite mental conceptions; and upon these conceptions of the logical consciousness he determined at what point in the heavens the unknown but disturbing influence should be located at a given time. By his direction the observatories turned their telescopes upon that point, and at the designated moment the hitherto undiscovered planet moved into plain view of the observers. Thus the rational consciousness of Leverrier, conspiring with data furnished by the testimony of the senses, detected the silent footsteps of Neptune as he trod the solitudes of immensity. Thus, it is evident, these tests are valid, not only in us, but in the existing structure of the physical universe about us. They are, therefore, the practical tests of truth.

Admitting, now, that these tests yield certitude in the relative universe—that is, the truth as it is embodied in the structure of all dependent or relative existence—may the practical truth, as thus ascertained, be affirmed as identical or in harmony with absolute truth—is truth in man one with truth in God? This is one of the weightiest questions of speculative philosophy. German philosophy, following Kant, held that no such affirmation can be made. The philosophy of the conditioned, as expounded by Hamilton and Mansel in Great Britain,



followed on the same line; and the sensational philosophy of Mill suggested, "There may be worlds in which two and two make five."

Of the tests we have named, manifestly none can be brought to bear on this question except pure reason, the rational consciousness—unless by revelation it might be submitted to other tests. How much and what can reason decide on this question? We answer:

1. That the "existing structure" of things harmonizes with absolute truth is at least probable.

2. This "existing structure" has the binding force of absolute truth until a contrary system is demonstrated.

3. The notion of "the true" is that truth is the rational, or formal, conception which may be explicated from a perfect thing or ideal.

4. As "absolute truth" is only another name for the infinite ideal, to suppose there may be inharmonious or contrary systems of truth is to suppose other than one infinite ideal; which, of course, is absurd and impossible to thought.

Hence, the truths which are implied in the "existing structure" of ourselves and the universe are affirmations of absolute truth, and must be regarded as necessary "implications of being."

From the foregoing considerations we can see that a valid system of philosophy resting upon absolute truth should be quite possible. And if practicable one may profitably discriminate for himself, and perhaps outline for others, such philosophic system. But some ask, "What good is there in philosophy, anyway?" This query often spoken is more often thought and felt by, perhaps, the majority of even intelligent people. It deserves, therefore, a candid answer:

Philosophizing is the effort of reason to arrange our knowledge so as to account for things, and to this extent, at least, understand them. A complete account of the relations of any class of things may be termed a philosophy of those things. But as all classes of things appear interrelated the need is felt of an account of all things, and especially of this interrelation of all things. Hence, a sufficient accounting must find all things interrelated as arising from one source. Hence, a complete system of philosophy can be professed in only a well-discriminated unit in which "thought and thing" are one; one entity from which all things possible may be derived and all thought explicated. Such philosophy when traced outwardly into the universe of variety will become self-discriminated into its branches—ontology, the science of being; psychology, the science of the soul; cosmology, the science of the world; physical science, the sciences of physical phenomena; and, we may add, structural sciences, theology, ethics, politics, history, criticism, etc.

The chief practical value of a philosophy is that it affords a just and well-balanced estimate of the *relative* importance of the various departments of knowledge and active pursuit. This enables one who is learned in one branch or a few branches of knowledge to avoid underestimating other branches. It thus furnishes an antidote for narrowness and exaggerated self-consciousness of specialists in any field of study. Especially does it tend to correct that vanity which prompts masters in one line of study to pronounce oracularly upon other lines.

Again, philosophy gives warning of the ultimate failure and death of every system, practice, belief, or cult that is unphilosophic. Has it a philosophy? is the test question in the world of truth. However well backed by power, wealth, or learning any system, belief, or institu-

tion may be, it must ultimately go down, renounced by the people who have held it or with it dragging them down, if it has not a self-sustaining philosophy. Moreover, one who is conscious that his position in science, politics, or religion accords with a sound philosophy cannot easily be imposed upon by writers or speakers on these themes. The winds of doctrine which sweep over these realms of truth leave him unmoved. In his thought he has found the primary unit, the absolute One; consequently he has found his own place in the world of truth, and does not run wild in the application of one idea, since he sees where it is modified by others.

The "primary unit" which can thus render a system of philosophy possible—by accounting for all variety—is, necessarily, recognized by reason as independent. The moment it appears dependent or limited, otherwise than by self-imposed limitations, its adequacy to account for universal variety disappears. These requisites, unity and independence, impose upon any system the decisive test of its claim to rank as a philosophy. Among the later attempts to account for the universe the most conspicuous are known as theories of evolution.

"Evolution" is a term which is applied to any theory which holds that the present is the product of the past; in the sense that no new or late forces have been interjected at any point, but that all existing facts, energies, and phenomena are products of, or have taken their rise from, facts and forces which have always existed. While this definition of evolution as a general theory is sufficiently comprehensive, it has been unfortunate in its application in most systems which bear its name. Spencer and Haeckel apply it to the entire universe, except to its origin. They assume, without argument, the self-existence of matter and force. These two factors given, they

claim the possible evolution of all phenomena under the "natural laws of action and reaction." With Spencer the assumed force seems to be identical with the God of theology, but as such, so far as physical science may affirm, must be termed "the unknowable." With Haeckel, the assumed matter and force are regarded as eternal, but unconscious. Hence, with Spencer evolution is the method by which force has developed the universe from preëxistent matter; while with Haeckel it is a theory positively atheistic which would dispense with an intelligent First Cause by holding the eternal existence of dead matter and unintelligent, blind force instead of an independent Creator. It is perhaps sufficient here to say that (1) evolution, as the *method* of creation and of conducting the universe, may be valid in philosophy; (2) materialistic schemes of evolution, as held by Lamarck, Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, and some others, are objectionable because arbitrary and narrow. Their arbitrary assumption of "matter and force" as a starting point is unphilosophic in that an assumption is not a point where reason can rest in its study of the fact of existence. Philosophy must assume nothing. Their narrowness, in failing to consider the nature of matter and the nature of force, is inadequate to account for life and personality. And in neither force nor matter, nor in both together, do they find the "primary unit," but flounder in helpless duality. A philosophic and adequate system of evolution can exist only by a discrimination of the original unit which reason demands; the nature of which unit involves all the possibilities of all being, and, in its evolution, all that is valid of the materialistic systems of Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, and all like them, will appear as merely incidental, transient, and fragmentary detail. *Hence, the nature of that unit, the essential basis of a self-sustain-*

*ing system of philosophy, is sought to be discriminated and its evolution outlined in this book, The Evolution of Love.*

The Evolution of Love is a brief outline of our conception of being, infinite and finite. It is offered, modestly, we hope, though confidently, as a self-sustaining system which arises naturally upon the mind when freed from imposing preconceptions. It offers a view of being which, better than any we have hitherto found, shows the meaning of human life, duty, and destiny; suggests a groundplan, or philosophy, upon which other knowledge and culture can be built in right relation and proportionate significance; and renders the heart more susceptible to those motives which alone can make "life worth living." It is a conception which, we believe, affords clear vision to both thought and faith, and exposes the unworthiness of that bigotry which, in the name of faith, antagonizes reason, and that charlatany which, in the name of reason, antagonizes faith.

It is important to place ourselves in a favorable attitude to receive truth—an attitude at once humble yet hopeful. Humility may free us from false assumptions and the pretentiousness of acquired lore. Hope may relieve us from the dread of that sanctimonious mystifying by which crudity seeks to silence inquiry. And both may give scope to faith and culture which have been cramped by cherished but inadequate systems.

That our terms should be the plainest and clearest at command is, of course, desirable, though we admit in advance that the defects of the writer and the difficult nature of the inquiry may, perhaps must, render portions of the work sufficiently difficult to require the closest attention to the force of each word. As no small pro-

portion of the labor preliminary to this writing has been to clear our way of the rubbish of unsatisfying theories and effete argumentation, we shall not unnecessarily encumber ourselves, now, with its terms. The best we can do with many of them is to forget them. Nor shall we exhibit the metaphysical work of the clearing process, but simply attempt to outline *the resulting system of evolution which is the constructive output of our philosophy*. We have sought, at all hazards, a clear view of truth, freed from the shifting and shirking of partisan advocacy; have sought the shrine where, in moral purity, rational accuracy, and emotional bliss, the soul finds rest.

The method of this book is very simple. It is merely to recognize facts and what they unavoidably imply; the method by which mankind have about all their valid knowledge. This method is intolerant toward surmising, plausibilities, "legal fictions," and preferred beliefs. We find too, in philosophy, but little use for probabilities, even, but hold ourselves amenable to the question, What does reason require? What *must* I think? We offer no chosen or preferred opinions; for, in philosophy, we have none. Our beliefs are held for the same reason we believe in the multiplication table and its implications—not because of any appeal they make to our taste or convenience, but because, in discriminating candor, we cannot get away from them.



**PART FIRST**  
**IMPLICATIONS OF BEING**



Love is something more than the desire for beauty. . . . He who has the instinct of true love, and can discern the relations of true beauty in every form, will go on from strength to strength until at last the vision is revealed to him of a single science, and he will suddenly perceive a nature of wondrous beauty, in the likeness of no human face or form, but absolute, simple, separate, and everlasting.—*Socrates*.

## CHAPTER I

### BEING, AS PERCEIVED

Most ignorant of what he's most assured.—*Shakespeare.*

WITH the assurance that truth, as we find it, is an affirmation of absolute truth, implied in the facts of being, we proceed to inquire, What are the implications of being? In this inquiry three cardinal questions arise in the natural order of knowing: 1. What of being is positively known?—treated in this chapter. 2. Resulting from this knowledge what conception of being must we form?—Chapter II, "Being, as Conceived." 3. Does that conception disclose the data of a philosophic system of evolution? Or, in other words, Do the truths which the fact of being thrusts upon us appear as merely a mass of fragmentary, unrelated ideas, or do they give us a validly discriminated conception of being in general? As we proceed to ascertain the answers to the first and second of these interrogatories we shall find the answer to the third and present it in Chapter III, "Being, as Conditioned."

*Facts are enacted realities.* Truths include, besides facts, the relations of facts and their inferences. But it is with facts as distinguished from other forms of truth we would chiefly deal. Fact, in our use of the term, includes enacted realities, both perceived and implied. Facts which we directly perceive imply other facts which we cannot perceive, but which the mind recognizes that we must accept along with the perceived facts in order that the latter may be intelligible. Otherwise, the perception must be surrendered, which is to surrender knowledge.

Perceived facts are self-evident to our direct perceptive power by either consciousness or the senses. Implied facts are self-evidently implied in the perceived facts as either given with them or implied as their cause. For example, all human beings who have looked upon the moon have seen but one and the same side of that orb. That side is self-evident to their perception by the sense of sight. But the other side is a fact which they have never seen, never perceived, but which is equally self-evident to them by direct implication. That is to say, the fact of the other side is directly, or necessarily, given with the perception of this side. The general fact, the moon, is the self-evident knowledge we have thrust upon us by perceiving its one side. That knowledge includes both sides, one perceived, the other implied, and equally self-evident.

But this side of the moon is not the *cause* of the other, nor the other of this; nor do we accept the fact of the other side as an inference from the side we perceive, but as a fact necessarily given in the perception, without which it is impossible to think of either.

Another form of implication is that of cause, or dependence—the dependence of a perceived fact upon its cause, which cause may not be at all perceptible, yet is necessarily implied as the cause of the fact perceived. And as it is necessarily implied it is a self-evident fact. For example, here are two bodies, one living, the other dead. They are so termed because motion, the evidence of life, is perceived in one, but not in the other. But the perception of this evidence is not the perception of the fact we term life. Life is the chief fact which differentiates the two bodies, but it is a fact which cannot be perceived. It is an implied fact which is self-evident, and must be accepted with the perceived facts, or else

these bodies cannot be thought of as either living or dead. If it be not accepted, then the perceived motions signify nothing as to either life or death, and knowledge of such things must be given up. But such folly regarding life is not found among men, though it is often manifest regarding implied facts of another class. All recognize and act upon the implied fact, life, though it eludes perception armed with scalpel and microscope. All treasure it as precedent to all that is precious in its perceived manifestations. "A dog, living, is better than a lion, dead!"

As thus recognized life is not merely a quality or relation or an inference, but an enacted reality, a self-evident fact, implied in the motion of beating pulse and heaving chest. The questions of whether and how pulse and breathing evince life are matters of relation and inference, but the thing, life, is thought as a fact. This implied fact is of far greater importance than the perceived motions which evince its presence. It is recognized as being the enacted reality on which bodily motion depends. Perceived facts but manifest their implied meanings, and when isolated from them are worthless for knowledge.

*Implication* is a term which comprehends all facts, relations, and inferences which must be thought in connection with admitted perceptions; hence, implied facts as well as perceived ones are essential data in practical affairs as well as in constructing a rational system. For, data which we think and use as fact enter into our knowledge as fact with strength and validity, whether perceived by consciousness or the senses, or they come by implications. Physical science, which boasts its basis of fact, could not subsist as science, with all its store of perceived facts, but for its chief fact, force, which is supplied only by implication. Only by the facts which they imply can perceived data be built into science. We may term them

truths, or principles, but it is our use of them as facts which enables us to construct the sciences.

It cannot be affirmed that in perceiving material objects we really perceive all their properties. Nor can it be claimed that all, or even many, of the phenomena of mental operations are noted by consciousness. Enough, however, are perceived to enforce definite discrimination of one material or mental fact from others. Hence, when it is said, we perceive a fact, it is this definite discrimination that is meant; not a perception of all which the fact contains. And in the case of implied facts it is not claimed that they force upon our recognition more than what distinguishes them as definite facts.

These facts of implication may draw after them other, even a whole train of implications, and so may give us a well-defined conception of an object which is not, at any point, open to perception. Hence, there are objects *conceived* as well as objects *perceived*. The former may be greater in every way than the latter, but our apprehension of them can arise only in connection with what is perceived. Hence, in attempting to trace the evolution of love, we must begin with some perceived fact, or facts, which must imply the facts and conditions of such evolution. If in the tangled morass of ignorance and doubt, termed human life, we can perceive a solid bank from which to spring an arch which by its self-sustaining coherence may lift its extending curve until it rests firmly upon the shore of destiny, let us not mourn the structures which have fallen. If such firm structure exists, and our task is but to accurately locate it and test its firmness, not too soon can we set about the work. If it is discoverable to thought it must be found in the implications of our being, and the base from which these implications are projected can only be "being, as perceived."

*Perception is knowing.* A question upon which many differences have arisen among philosophers is this: What is perceived? Connected with this are the other questions: What is necessarily implied in the things perceived? And what is merely apparent, or, at most, but possibly implied? It were a weary and worthless task to point out all the theories which have been wrought from different views of these questions; hence it will not be attempted here. Let us be content with what all are compelled to admit, with what is perforce common ground, namely, that within ourselves we have the direct perception of being. This much, at least, is reality. We do not have this perception of each other, but each for himself, alone, knows himself as being. He does from this perception *infer* that there are other beings, but he *knows* positively and directly one, and that is himself. He does not know *how* he can be as he is, but simply perceives directly that he is. This knowledge he cannot deny, he does and must directly perceive it, it is his perceiving self; *he perceives himself as perceiving.*

Sensational philosophy has tried to show that this self-conscious action results from sensations externally given. But this is an attempt to show how we are as we are, but it does not account for the fact of a perceiving agent, a perceiver who perceives himself in the act of perceiving and distinguishing these sensations. At best this philosophy can only locate the perceiver in the sensations, and thus require the sensations to perceive themselves. But in this move it does not get rid of a conscious actor, or the reality of being. Besides, when the past, and now impossible, sensations are, in memory, called up and reflected upon, this philosophy shows no sensation to which this recollection and reflection can be attributed. The self-centered being who consciously per-

ceives sensation, recalls sense-perceptions after the sensations have ceased, reflects upon them, often acts emotionally concerning them, and perceives himself as so acting, is the one being whom I directly know. Thus the fact of being comes to me as direct and unavoidable knowledge. It is the first, deepest and broadest, of perceived facts.

This knowledge is a knowledge of action—action which knows itself only in action. The act of knowing itself is consciousness, or self-perception. The absence of action is, hence, the absence of knowing, and, for aught I know, the absence of being. If there are beings without action I know nothing of them, inasmuch as I know myself only as acting, others by reaction and interaction, but have no evidence of my own or any other's being, save action.

Thus it is seen that the foundation of all my knowledge of reality is the fact of my individual action. Stripped of everything of which I cannot know the reality, this stands out, a definite, conscious power. This is being, as perceived; or, being as each person in himself perceives the fact of being.

The term "being" does not, then, stand for an abstraction which some have styled "pure being." An abstraction is nothing, and nothing can come of it. An acting, perceiving, determined or determining thing can alone be a real being. Self-perceiving action, conscious power, can in no way be questioned, avoided, or spirited away. Nothing but annihilation can rid one of it. All efforts to avoid it or call it in question are only attempted relocations—relocations in sensations of assumed external origin.

The science of being, ontology, properly begins with this known reality, and proceeds to trace its implications and recognize the questions it raises. The mind, or soul,

as I know it, is this conscious power, an acting unit. If asked, "What is mind-substance?" the only answer I can give, or need to give, is, Power; that which acts. I confidently give this answer, because this power knows itself as action, knows itself as enacted reality, a constant fact. It is not worth while to ask one how he knows he has a soul, for of the few things it is impossible for him not to know the chief is that he is a soul; and this nothing but annihilation, nonbeing, can prevent his knowing.

But there could be no science of being were this the only fact that could be known of being. For, when I attempt to think of only the fact, being, I am shut up to one view, namely: *I am a self-existent being*. Existence implies self-existence, somewhere; and self-sustained being is a fact *given* in the perceived fact of being; and if I know nothing to the contrary I am that self-existent one. But when I think further that a self-existent being must be independent, then I must infer that I am independent. But I find, as a matter of fact, I am not independent, and, therefore, am not self-existent. So, thought is confounded and brought to naught unless other facts of being may be known. Such knowledge, to be valid for me, must come in the conscious action which I know as Myself; hence, I search myself for further facts.

The nature, as well as the fact, of the being whom I know, and each knows for himself, is also given in our conscious action. That is to say, we are conscious of an *order* of action in our being. This order is what I recognize as the nature of the actor, myself. For example, I know myself as acting in self-perceiving, in sense-perceiving, in reasoning, feeling, intending, choosing, doing, etc. Hence, I say it is my nature to perceive, reason, feel, will, do. Moreover, I know that in most, if not all, of these classes or orders my action is limited, and hence



know that I am not only a causal power, but know that this order and limitation are imposed upon my actions, giving me the knowledge that I am dependent—dependent upon conditions.

The persons may be few who logically define or describe this nature. Its various classes of action may not be clearly or similarly traced by different thinkers; nevertheless, all men, alike, have these classes of action, and know themselves as thus acting, and equally well experience the conditions which limit their action. Doubtless, all men equally well know themselves as limited, dependent.

*Dependent being* is the reality which I perceive. That there must have been a time when I did not exist, that there are places where I do not and cannot exist, that I cannot perceive anything except as conditioned by time or space, that my knowledge is limited to action within myself and what is presented to me by sensation, that my volitions are carried out by means of reaction and interaction with forces external to me, which condition their efficiency, I am forced to recognize in my knowledge of my own being. Limitation is as surely known to me as being.

The order of my action, termed my nature, gives me, first, self-perception, or consciousness. This fixes my knowledge of individual identity. This individual identity abides unmoved through all the changes of feeling and thought which I undergo, and all the varied sense-perceptions and volitions which I perform. Whatever changes have taken place in my physique, actions, feelings, or states of knowledge, this has remained unchanged. My deepest, clearest, and permanent perception of my being is as an individual unit.

I perceive also, in what is termed sense-perception, that

there are activities, or forces, other than mine which affect me—that change my states of knowledge and modify my feelings and activities. These give sharp discrimination to myself as limited by externality. Externality, as here recognized, is not an empty abstraction, such as the “non-ego” of Fichte, or the “not-me” of certain other writers, but forces which impose upon me the knowledge of reaction and interaction—knowledge that I am acted upon.

In some classes of my action I know myself as simply recognizing and interpreting, but not originating the action recognized. For example, consciousness, or self-perception, is but a recognition of the fact, my being; but the action which establishes and maintains the conditions of my being I do not perceive; it is not my action. I only perceive its effects in conditioning action. In sense-perception my action is simply recognizing and interpreting sensations of sight, sound, odor, taste, and touch. In reason I compare perceptions, note their likenesses and differences, and draw conclusions from such comparison. The act of comparing is my act, but the action which gives likeness and difference to the things perceived, and fixes the forms in which I must know and compare them, is independent of me. In like manner, the sense of moral authority is imposed upon me, sometimes much against my desires, yet my action regarding its rise within me is but that of recognition and interpretation. In all these modes of action I know myself as but recognizing and interpreting that which I do not posit or cause. Thus my nature is known by me as a self-evident effect, dependent upon forces which evince themselves as other than I who recognize and interpret them.

It is not claimed here that my interpretation of externality discovers the nature of the external, but simply

the fact of its existence. But this fact is as directly known in my acts of recognition and interpretation as the fact of my being. The interpreting act is part of my action, and the fact that I know this action is merely recognition and interpretation fixes upon me the knowledge that I am in interaction with, and dependent upon, some external action which founds and environs me. Hence, I know my nature is that of *an individual but dependent power*.

But although the knowledge of myself is that of a dependent power it alone gives me the general fact of existence. And it is impossible to take up the thought of existence without implying *self-existence*. Nor do I derive this implied fact only as an inference from my own causal power, but it is directly given in the perceived fact of being; just as the fact of the other side of the moon—which man has never seen—is given in our perception of this side. The side we see is not the cause of the other side, nor caused by it, but is the perceived fact which it is impossible to think of without implying the fact of the other side. This side is a self-evident fact by perception, the other a self-evident fact by necessary implication. So, existence is a perceived fact, and self-existence is necessarily implied in it.

But an apparent discrepancy arises now between two perceived facts, namely, being and dependent being—to the atheist an impassable gulf. But this discrepancy disappears as soon as we observe the implications of these facts severally. I cannot entertain the general idea of existence without including in that idea a self-existent energy. Self-sustained existence is necessarily given in the general fact of existence. My direct knowledge of my being is that of simple self-existence, but it is contradicted by the further perception of my *dependent nature*.

The implied fact of self-existence cannot be gotten rid of; no more than the implied fact of the other side of the moon, although I find by my dependence that *I* am not self-existent. I must concede action somewhere which exists of itself, and founds its own order of action. The self-perceived being, myself, whom I know as dependent, does not satisfy the fact of self-existence which is given with it. Though all limited beings stand alongside me, each knowing himself an acting reality, and though the number were indefinitely multiplied and the reality of their existence demonstrated to me, yet all these fail to fill out the thought, or supply the self-evident fact of self-existence which it is impossible to drop from the perceived fact of existence. Thus, though the being whom I directly perceive is dependent, the general fact of being, thus known, is impossible to thought without independence. The implied fact of independent, or self-existent, being is self-evidently given with my direct perception of the fact of being.

But the fact of dependence has its implied demands. Not only have I perceived the fact of being, but I perceive the fact that I am *dependent*. When the fact of my being is modified by the fact of dependence the question of the *cause* of my dependent existence is raised, and by the law of reason which demands a cause for every change I am forced to recognize a self-existent, or independent, power as the cause of this change which gives rise to the fact of dependent being. The fact of my being is seen to be impossible without its dependence upon an independent being. Thus these two perceived facts, *being* and *dependence*, severally, compel the recognition of independent action, or being. The first implies it as a fact given in the perception of being, as the perception of one side of an object carries with it the fact of the other side;

the second by necessary inference, inasmuch as dependent existence must imply an independent cause upon which it depends.

There is no difficulty in thinking of self-existence once the fact of any existence is perceived ; it cannot be avoided. We cannot get rid of it. The real difficulty is to think *how* any being came to be. This "how" is impossible for us to solve, for the reason that like the "how" of all bottom facts it is outside the limits of human inquiry. But, however impossible it is to know *how* being is, *the fact that it is* is the most unquestionable of all facts.

A bright young girl in Sunday school said to her teacher, "Somehow I do not get hold of the idea of an independent, or self-existent, being."

The teacher replied, "You are perfectly sure of your own existence?"

"I certainly am."

"You are sure you are a dependent being?"

"Yes, surely."

"Can you get hold of the idea of the dependence of *all* being?"

"No, it is impossible."

"Then, being must be independent somewhere?"

"Yes, certainly, I see the fact of being must, somewhere, stand alone ; and *that* must be independent being."

"Then, having the fact of being, given in your own being, it cannot be doubted ; and the implied fact of independent being, which cannot be separated from it, is equally free from doubt?"

"Yes, I see the fact of independent being is given in the simple fact of being which I perceive in myself."

"But, a little further. You say you are certain you are a dependent being?"

"I certainly am."

"How do you know that fact?"

"I perceive it in my nature."

"But can you think of dependence without implying an independent upon which it finally depends?"

"I cannot."

"Then you perceive two distinct facts, *being* and *dependence*, in each of which appears the fact of independent being. In the first it is directly given, in the second, it is implied as a cause."

That I cannot perceive the independent actor is nothing as against the fact of such actor; I am unable to perceive any actor but myself. Hence, the implied fact of an independent being is not placed in doubt by my inability to perceive it. But, on the other hand, the *implied* fact, independent being, is all that can be thought from the two perceived facts, namely, my being and my dependence. Nor can one or the other of these perceived facts be thought, any more than the two jointly, without implying independent being as a third fact. This I must accept or strangle thought at its birth.

To a theistic conclusion the line of thought from this point is short, direct, and decisive: Perceived being and perceived dependent being imply an independent; independent being is perfectly self-determining; self-determination is personality; and perfect, or infinite, self-determination is perfect, or infinite, personality; hence, the independent is the perfect, infinite, or unconditioned person, *God*.

This is not claimed to be a demonstration, but is the implied fact of God as the only view possible to thought; and, since it shuts us up to the alternative of accepting theism or wholly renouncing thought, it has all the argumentative force of demonstration. We must resign thought and play the fool if we say there is no God.

The atheist can adduce no evidence to prove there is no God. He queries, "What is the origin of God?" But this is not the whole question. The real question is, How does being come to exist? To this question of *how*, human thought can give no answer; yet the *fact* of being is the first, largest, and surest of all facts—a fact which we all perceive. This perceived fact has in it the implied fact which cannot be gotten rid of, and without which the perceived fact of being is totally unintelligible, namely, that being is at some point self-existent, independent. I perceive the general fact, being, in perceiving myself, and this general fact cannot be thought except as self-existent, yet it must be accepted because perceived—a *known fact*.

As being is, at some point or in some mode, self-existent, it is independent—that is, unconditioned—and hence perfectly self-determined. Perfect self-determination is infinite freedom, infinite self-determination; and this is an infinite person.

Hence, atheism is not a question for debate. It has no standing ground in thought, but is renunciation of thought. Between the theist and the atheist the question must be, Thought or no thought—reason or folly? Thought, contemplating the fact, being, has self-existent, independent being on its hands. The only way to get rid of it is to resign thought, abnegate reason.

*Agnosticism* is the rejection of theism because God, as God, is not *perceived* by us. The blunder of agnosticism is in looking for this fact in the range of perception instead of in the realm of implied fact. It overlooks that God is an unavoidably implied fact forced upon reason by the perceived fact of being; and also by the perceived fact of dependence.

It is objected: "You assume a self-existent God, why

may not we assume, instead, the *eternal existence of matter*, and that in the long eons of duration *disturbances* have arisen, by chemical influences, *originating action*, or generating force, which in succeeding eons has *evolved* all present existing forces and phenomena?" We answer: This adroitly put query is made up of one false statement and five groundless assumptions, all making an unthinkable proposition. The false statement is that we *assume* God merely to account for existing phenomena. This is incorrect. This inquiry assumes nothing, and will accept nothing based upon assumption, but is compelled by perceived facts and the requirements of reason to accept God. The five "groundless assumptions" are: 1. The eternal existence of matter. 2. That matter is substance, or stuff. 3. That disturbance by chemical influences did arise or could arise in dead matter. 4. That these disturbances could originate action, or create force. 5. That such action could evolve forces not originally in it, especially life, self-consciousness, self-determination, abstract ideas, and conscience. Further, the whole proposition is impossible to thought, for the reason that matter is dependent, hence cannot be thought as self-existent. That a dependent being, person, or thing can be self-existent is unthinkable.

Again it is suggested: If we assume the eternal existence of matter *and force* can we not account for all existing entities, forces, and phenomena? Yes, but to assume a force adequate to the case is to assume the independent actor, identical with the God of theology; termed by Spencer, "Unknowable," that is, undiscoverable by physical science.

*Pantheism* is not so readily disposed of, for the reason that it has apparently more ground than atheism or agnosticism on which to stand. This is because panthe-



ism seems implied in the fact of self-existence which is given in the general fact of being, perceived in myself; until I perceive that I am a dependent power, other than that upon which I depend. The burden rests upon the theist to show this. It must appear that to God my action is objective, external.

Objection has been made to the idea of an infinite person. Spinoza, first, in modern times, and finally Matthew Arnold, advanced the criticism that the infinite is limited by regarding it as personal; that is, personality is necessarily finite, limited. But this is an oversight in this class of thinkers, an oversight which comes of regarding the infinite as the aggregate of all things. This is the same as supposing there can be an infinite quantity, which supposition is, of course, absurd and a contradiction in terms. Quantity is identical with limitation, and to speak of an infinite made up of limited things is but a contradiction in terms.

Another snare into which these eminent thinkers have fallen is in regarding personality as quantitative. Their charge of anthropomorphism and fetichism, upon theists, is because they suppose personality to consist in certain defined limits, personal organization, physical or mental. Anthropomorphism, the conceiving of God as a man on a large or infinite scale, is certainly a fatal notion in theology when the personality of either God or man is supposed to consist in quantitative dimensions or qualitative degrees. Fetichism, the attributing life or personal identity to material objects, organic or inorganic, comes of the same quantitative idea of personality. Nor is there any radical change in the idea as it exists in the mind of the child who strikes the chair for throwing him down, the Bushman who worships his greegree, the pantheist who has the cosmos for his God,

or the agnostic who rejects a personal infinite lest personality may impose quantitative limitations upon the infinite. We can discriminate the infinite only as unconditioned action, absolute freedom. So, also, personality is not a quantity nor an organization of quantities, not a quality nor a collection of qualities, subject to degrees, but is purely a matter of original action. Size, weight, form, or physical organization cannot make man a person. Neither does thought nor feeling. He may have all these and still be a mere animal or machine if all his qualities are determined for him, in kind and degree, by some other power. But it is because man determines himself, in certain respects, that he is entitled a person. He can surmount and throw off many of his limitations, if he choose, or can impose upon himself other or greater limitations; but in either case he originates his choice, and initiates the process by which he is determined upward or downward in the scale of limitations.

He alone forms his intentions; he may intend injury to others, but may be restrained from effecting such injury; yet he affects and degrades himself by such intentions, which none else can prevent. He may develop or abuse his qualities of mind and body, and thus elevate or degrade his nature, while his free choice either way determines his character. That character, good or bad, reacts favorably or unfavorably upon his natural qualities, and so gives them higher uses or deeper abuses, as he may decide. Because of self-determination, man forms a character, and character is made up of those qualities, so determined, upon which men estimate human worth.

Again, progress is that which is attained by individuals and communities, by comparing simple facts and from these drawing conclusions. These conclusions, in turn,

are compared, and from this comparison higher conclusions are drawn and acted upon. So sciences are built, governments are constructed and improved, culture is amplified, and progress in every way achieved by man's self-chosen use of himself and his environment, and his self-determining power to transcend his elementary conditions. Being a person, he is capable of rising from the limitations of savagery to the less limiting conditions of refinement; being a person, he can abuse the enhanced advantages of refinement, and thereby bring upon himself the limitations of a brute.

*Self-determination is personality.* A mere thing which is determined in all respects by action external to it, as a grain of sand, a block of wood, or a graven image, is wholly without personality. Brutes, being but creatures of impulse, volitionally, never devoting themselves to self-improvement, nor deemed blameworthy for lack of such devotement, likewise fall short of personality. Person is distinguished from thing or brute in being able to determine himself to be this or that in any or all respects. I am free to form my intentions and determine my character, but am limited in resources from which to contrive or gain objects concerning which to choose and intend; and also limited in my instrumentalities by which to realize intentions. But these limitations are simply like hedges around my personality, merely limited resources and instruments. In the use of such resources and instruments as I have I am arbiter. In this respect I am free, without limit in the freedom of choice.

Personal consciousness resides in self-determination. Hence, I am a person and realize my personality, not in degrees and quantities, but in actual freedom in certain respects. But I am not a perfect, or infinite, person for these reasons, namely: I am dependent for my existence,

I have not determined my own nature, have not adjusted my environment, and am dependent upon forces external to me for my interaction with all that is external to my conscious power; in these respects I am an effect, and, hence, a dependent, or finite, person. An infinite person is thought as one who determines himself in all respects; his nature, character, and environment are dependent in no respect. Independent action, or unconditioned action, however it may be phrased, is perfect, or infinite, self-determination; and since self-determination is personality, infinite self-determination is infinite personality.

That independent action is unconditioned action is axiomatic. That the independent is an infinite person is the same as to say he is the unconditioned person. He has no characteristic of an effect other than what is self-imposed. Whatever he is, he is by his own self-determination, limited by no preëxisting conditions or principles. We hear, sometimes, of "eternal principles," but there are no such things apart from the action of the Infinite Being. A principle is nothing but an order or relation in actions, established by the actor; without action or actor the principle vanishes.

Moreover, we can discriminate nothing as infinite except self-determining power, nothing unconditioned but freedom; and all talk of anything being infinite except self-determining action and its qualities is but a jumbling of terms—often a use of the word "infinite" in the sense of "indefinite." The infinite cannot be pictured to our imagination, nor in any way grasped by our minds, except by logically discriminating it as an independent actor, the personal infinite. It is, therefore, impossible to think of independent action as other than personal self-determination, or of primary being as other than the Infinite Person.

We close this chapter with the theistic formula :

1. Perceived, dependent being unavoidably implies independent being.
2. Independent being is infinitely self-determining.
3. Self-determination is personality; and infinite self-determination is infinite personality.
4. Hence, the perceived fact, my dependent being, unavoidably implies the Infinite Person, God.

"I am, O God; and surely thou must be."

## CHAPTER II

### BEING, AS CONCEIVED

No man hath seen God at any time.—*Saint John.*

OUR use of the word "conceived" or "conception" does not imply a picturing of God to the mind nor imagining how he might appear to our vision. Such idea of conception is admissible in works of fiction, but in philosophy must be wholly renounced. It is the snare in which those thinkers are caught who lay down the proposition, "The infinite is inconceivable." To use the word in this pictorial sense in order to set aside the *rational* discrimination of the infinite is merely to play "fast and loose" with the term. Only a rationally discriminated conception can be countenanced in reasoning. Such conception arises when we discriminate the rational implications of facts. A true conception answers to the question, What must be thought?

Perceived facts are worthless when isolated from the facts which they imply. These implications are enacted realities; the perceived facts are but such perception as we have of these enactments or of their effects. Perceived facts may imply in them a whole train of implied facts; and these, with their relations to each other, may force upon us a definite conception of an object which is in no way open to perception. Hence, there are objects to be *conceived* as well as objects to be *perceived*. Scientists, for example, say they perceive physical phenomena, which they account for by the conceived facts which they term forces and which they clearly discriminate as facts, but never attempt to picture.

In discriminating the fact of being and its implications we do not attempt to transcend the limits of human reason by trying to picture the infinite, but we simply recognize such contents of the perceived fact of being as are unavoidably, that is, self-evidently, implied, and hence must be affirmed. In our use of them the terms "infinite," "absolute," "independent," and "unconditioned" have a rationally discriminated meaning, and like use is made of the term "conceived" in the title of this chapter. The significance of the title would be preserved if written, "Being, as Discriminated."

It is vain to say that we have no conception of God; for, indeed, all men have a conception of such being which they themselves form or accept from others. Some may say they have no such conception, when they only mean that they have not formulated their conception and decline to do so. There are writers, even, who seem to think they have disposed of all conceptions of God by terming him "The Unknowable"; but in this they simply declare that he is not an object of perception, and that it is not to the interest of their theories to admit their conception as a fact, or that it is too incoherent for definition. All sane men, both crude and cultured, are more or less conscious of the implications of their being, and from this consciousness they explicate the more or less crude conception of an independent or supreme power, which conception underlies their beliefs and practices.

There is no surer method by which to expose the fallacies of a system, the baselessness of a theory, or the false trend of a line of practice than to lay bare the false conceptions on which it rests. Therefore, since God is the first, deepest, and surest implication of our being, it is a matter of the greatest moment that our conception of him, especially so far as it is acted upon, should be

correctly discriminated. It may be claimed, by some, that "revelation has already given us the true conception of God." Without our either disputing or affirming this claim, here, the thought suggests itself, that as matters have stood for several centuries among believers in revelation, it would be worth their while, first, to agree upon a well-defined conception of God embodied in, not read into the Scriptures.

Having seen in the preceding chapter the necessary implications of being as *perceived*, we now seek to ascertain the necessary implications of being as *conceived*; or, in other words, having seen that the perceived fact of being and the perceived fact of dependence compel us to accept the implied fact of an independent person, we now proceed to ascertain what is implied in this independent or infinite person. In accepting him what further must we accept?

*Perfect action*, simply, is what we recognize as infinite being. This conception is not made up of several ideas pinned together, but stands out as the primary power, sufficient to itself, which we must recognize as the independent, unconditioned unit. This conception implies that, 1. Being is acting, and acting is being, and ceasing to act is ceasing to be; and that, 2. Perfect action is perfect being, a consciously self-sustained nature, an order of action which is wholly self-dependent—that is, independent.

But we desire to ascertain *what kind* of action is perfect action? There are some kinds or classes of action which cannot be perfect, or unconditional, however powerful or free, simply for the reason that they are of a kind which is necessarily conditioned or related. Perfect action must imply more than merely dynamic perfection, mere almightiness. 'Action is reality, is life—real



being; but it takes *perfectly self-adjusted* action to fill out the notion of perfect reality, perfect action, perfect being. That is to say, it must be thought perfect as to quality, as well as without degree. Unconditioned freedom realizing qualitative perfection can alone satisfy the conception of perfect action. This implies that this conception includes an idea or notion of the *nature* of that action. The next step, therefore, in our outline, is to define this notion of the nature of perfect action.

We think of a human mind as, not an aggregate of sensation, perception, consciousness, reason, memory, imagination, feeling, and will, but a single being who acts in these various modes, classes, or orders. In the same sense the infinite Person may be regarded in various orders, modes, or classes of action. Hence, we recognize two general classes of personal action, subjective and objective.

Subjective action is that which we identify with *being*; objective with *doing*. The former includes all that pertains to self-determination, or in any way determines the subject, the person; the latter, all that pertains to choices, intentions, or volitions which are directed externally, or determine objects. In common usage the terms act and action generally signify *objective* action. For example, "We judge a man's character by his actions." But this is only an accommodated, or popular, not an exact, use of the word action. But in exact usage *all being is action*. In thinking of being we think of action, without which being cannot be, nor can it be thought to be. It is in this exact use of the term we speak of subjective and objective action.

*The nature* is usually identified with subjective action. To speak of the nature of the infinite Person relates, primarily, to his subjective or egoistic action. We do

not conceive of his nature as an order of action prescribed by any thing or principle external to himself, to mold this nature, but we discriminate it as that independent action which is consciously self-determined; an order or nature of being, concerning which it is competent for us to inquire: What kind of a being is he; what is his nature?

Such inquiry may take either of two directions: first, as to what nature is implied in unconditioned, or infinite, action or being; or, secondly, what do his objective activities in the world indicate regarding his nature? The first question is *ontological*, the second *cosmological*. The latter inquiry involves two assumptions, namely: That world-phenomena are of his objective activities; and that these are in harmony with his nature and constitute an intelligible exponent of the same. We eschew this cosmological inquiry for the reason that in itself it is indeterminate, and must at last depend upon ontology. Its course is strewn with many failures. For the present we pursue the ontological method.

What does reason affirm is the implied nature of perfect action? or, what is the nature of the unconditioned person?

As volition, in me, has to do with intentions and objective activities, I distinguish that form of action from my nature as given in my consciousness. That is to say, the order of action which constitutes the conditions of my being is my nature, and is not established, or posited, by me. That order of my action which is termed intention, or purpose, or will determines the qualities which make up my character, and is posited by me. My nature is an effect, dependent in the fixed forms of action in which I consciously perceive it, while, on the other hand, my intentions are my free, self-originated action. My nature

is given me. My character I, myself, determine. But when we think of the independent One we must conceive his nature, as well as character, as being volitionally self-determined. Hence, we must think of him as existing according to his self-chosen order. That is to say, nature and character are one in him. Hence, we lay down, as distinctively the chief corner stone of our system, this all-dominating principle:

1. *Perfect action, conscious and volitional, is the highest generalization, the ultimate or primary unit, the unconditioned, infinite being.* Perfect action is here recognized as ultimate unity, the goal of philosophy— infinite, unconditioned reality. It is perfect being, perfectly self-determining, perfectly self-conscious, the perfect person. Perfect action is perfect self-determination, or the independent realization of a perfect egoism. This affirmation scarcely needs to be thus reiterated, but, perhaps, needs a more explicit notice at this point.

A work of art is termed the actualization, or realization, of a conception of the mind when it fixes that conception as an enacted thing in perceptible form. The Eiffel tower existed at first as a conception in the thought of the architect, but this conception was not a real tower. A very minute description of this tower was published, but this description was not a tower, and could serve none of the purposes for which the tower was intended. Only the actual building of the tower made it a reality. This was its actualization, realization, or *determination*. The action which thus fixes a conception, or practically carries out a definition or description, is determination. When a conception, or ideal, is thus actualized it is a determined, a real thing. Thus, practically carrying out, realizing, actualizing, or determining is simply enacting that which may be thought, either as a previously formed

conception or as the present self-consciousness of what is being enacted.

When a person enacts in himself that which he thinks or desires to be he determines himself in that respect. His thought or desire is no longer a mere conception or wish, but a reality. This is *self-determination*.

The person who conceives what manner of person he would be has, in this conception, an ideal self; and his effort to act out that ideal is his self-determination. If he succeeds in bringing his actual self up to the standard of this ideal self his self-determination is successful. This is *conditioned self-determination*—conditioned by the previously formed conception, or ideal. It is this power of self-determination, thus and otherwise conditioned, that constitutes conditioned, or dependent, personality.

Perfect action cannot be thought of as conditioned by a previously formed conception, or ideal, which it seeks to realize, but its self-consciousness, as, in our thinking, we distinguish it from the action, is the absolute, or infinite, ideal. Hence, we have a clear conception that perfect action is not conditioned even by an objective ideal. It is perfect self-determination, conscious of itself.

The "ultimate unit" *we find in perfect self-determination*. As perfect action is independent of interaction, or of any means or conditions, it must be a unit. It is not an interaction of several forces; for that would be related action, and, hence, not independent, but conditioned. The existence of more than one infinite being cannot be thought, for the reason that it would imply mutual relation, and, hence, mutual dependence and limitation. Neither can perfect action be thought as objective action, for the reason that it must then be thought to act in relation to its object. Perfect action must be thought a self-realizing subject. Perfect, in the sense

of independent, or unconditioned, action, it is without interaction and without relation. It is simply a perfectly self-determined unit.

In a unit which is perfectly self-determined is the oneness of "thought and thing," or, rather, the oneness of thought and action. Finite minds find it difficult to identify thought and act. This difficulty arises from the fact that their self-determination is conditioned; and prominent among their conditions is that of the separate action of judgment and will, involving the acquirement of sufficient knowledge to form a conception or judgment upon which by act of will to determine themselves. On this account their determining intentions succeed their thought, and the thought is but an ideal or definition, not a reality, not a real thing, until it is enacted.

Nevertheless, when we discriminate independent self-determination we recognize that perfect reality in which perfect thought is self-conscious; that perfect action which is perfectly conscious of itself. The self-consciousness of perfect thought is, identically, the self-consciousness of perfect action. Consciously perfect action and consciously perfect thought are only other phrasings of *consciously perfect being*.

We admit that we may well hesitate to claim that we find here the ultimate oneness of "thought and thing," since failure in this attempt has been honored by some of the greatest names in the history of philosophy. But the truth is we cannot see that the facts can be otherwise than as stated above. Some may query, How can thought and act be one? But this impenetrable "How" of being is distinctly what has nothing to do with this matter. As Professor Bowne has pertinently said, it is asking, "how being is made"—a question which, perhaps, only an infinite thinker can ever understand.

The reasoning which leads us to affirm that perfect self-determination is perfectly self-conscious seems to the writer without flaw. Certainly, action or being cannot be thought perfect if it is not perfectly conscious of itself. Hence, we must say, action cannot be perfect without perfect thought; and perfect thought cannot exist except in perfect action. The perfection of either is in the perfection of the other. We cannot see otherwise than that unconditioned, perfect self-determination is one in thought and act. *It is the consciously perfect unit.*

Although perfect action is not compound, but simple, yet we may affirm of it or explicate from it various phases or qualities of this simple unit without impairing our conception of it as an unconditioned unit. From this primary unit we explicate thought and thing. In our thinking we separate the affirmations of qualities, or properties, which this unit implies or founds. Hence, we may affirm that as perfect action it is perfect reality, and as the *consciousness* of perfect reality it is perfect thought, or the infinite ideal. But we cannot affirm perfection in either aspect of this unit if we deny, or suppose, the absence of perfection in the other; to suppose the absence of infinite consciousness will prevent our affirming it perfect action, to suppose it less than perfect action prevents the affirmation of infinite consciousness. Turn it any way you will, this independent self-determination, which we have termed perfect action, is to our thought an impenetrable unit, but concerning which our thought compels us to admit certain affirmations.

Although perfect personality is included in the affirmations which we have already made, it may maintain clearness of view to emphasize at this point as a fundamental truth that—

II. *Perfect action is perfectly intentional.* We affirm

of this unit both absolute will and absolute purpose; by which we mean that it is absolutely free action, is not related to, nor in need of, means, conditions, nor causes, and yet has a fixed, eternal intent. Self-determination is, essentially, *intention*. In the various classes of our action there is none in which we are self-determining except that in which thought and act are united; and this is the action which we term intending, or the intent or inner purpose. But, with us, there are many conditions and classes of self-conditioning action which are needed as preparatory to forming an intention, and many in giving it effect. Yet we do not accomplish self-determination without intention, no matter how full and favorable our conditions may be. And although we are often prevented from carrying out our intention externally, by external restraint, or by lack of means or opportunity, yet it determines our inner character. The intention to murder gives a man the character of a murderer although he may never have had the opportunity to shed a drop of blood. Intent is, subjectively, the union of thought and act. It determines the character of the ego, the inner, real self.

But we are conscious of having constructed, formed, this intention; of having united thought and act, or desire and will. Hence, we praise or blame each other for only what we have intended. But in perfect being intention is not conditioned, not made up of preliminary or accessory self-conditioning, but is unconditioned, and hence is perfect, or independent, self-determination. We easily see that if we were thus independent of all conditions, needed nothing by which to either form or effectuate our self-determination, we would be in our nature, as well as character, as we intend. Our intent would determine our nature, as now it does our character.

Hence it is correct to say that the *nature* of perfect action is unconditioned, eternal intent.

The habitual intent of a man's life is that which he would be, and accounts for what he does or would do. It is the determining force in each person. One is intent upon fame, another upon wealth, and another upon pleasure. It determines his character and accounts for his minor and external acts. It is the supreme intention of his life. It is in this sense that we say concerning the nature of the independent person: The unconditioned intention is the self-determination of perfect being. *Intention is realization with him.* To be less were to be conditioned. Hence, the nature of perfect action, perfect self-determination, the primary unit, the absolute reality, the independent person, is intentionally perfect being.

*Devotement* is a term which may express the full import of what we discriminate as the nature of the perfect being. His nature must be thought as action devoted to the realization of perfect being; the constant, eternally self-realizing intent. When the intent involves the entire being, determines all his qualities, and contemplates neither change nor end, it may be termed devotement. And if this intent realizes itself immediately, achieves its realization without means or any other order of action, it is unconditioned, independent devotement. It is, at once, devotement and achievement. Thus independent it is not compound, but simple—action which is at once the life in which are infinite thought, wish, and will.

Unconditioned devotement cannot be thought except as purely egoistic, perfectly free, perfectly self-conscious, perfectly self-chosen, definite and supreme. It has in it nothing aimless, fortuitous, or fatalistic. As devotement is central in our conditioned personality, it is single



and eternal in the unconditioned person. It is neither obedience, on the one hand, nor caprice, on the other. Independent, it obeys neither necessity, instinct, nor conditions. Devoted, it is of infinite meaning, interest, and purpose. It is in no sense nor degree without intentional significance.

In man, devotement is the self-disposing force which adjusts all the energies of his being. For example: Here is a man led out to be beheaded. This catastrophe has not been unforeseen by him. It has been contemplated in his self-adjustment; and the course of life which has led up to this scene has been one of almost unrivaled hardship. Its sufferings have been equaled only by its renunciations; for the sufferer is of gentle breeding, scholarship, and saintly character. His was high caste, but he renounced it; repute, but he forfeited it; political promise, but he turned his back upon it; wealth, but he chose to be an outcast. As a preacher he made long tours of the Roman empire, paying his way from the earnings of his own hands. Nothing in the circumstances of this lawyer and scholar, nothing of worldly gain or ambition, can explain his self-determined attitude as a preacher. He had, though in chains, argued and taught with Roman thinkers; though hungry, instructed philosophers at Athens. Friendless and buffeted, he had, by his eloquence, disarmed mobs at Jerusalem; and, though a prisoner, had made kings and courts quail under his persuasive power. Neither insanity nor depravity can be a solution of this marvel of self-abnegation. Back of every other order of action, back of suffering, labor, speech, reasoning, planning, praying—back of all these must be found the determining action which disposed and sustained the subject of this career of restless, and apparently wasteful, endeavor. He himself disclosed the secret which had

puzzled friend and foe. *Devotement to the realization of an ideal self*—that ideal self for which he had been “apprehended of Christ”—he declared was this self-determining force in his life. In this devotement there was nothing aimless, fortuitous, or fatalistic. It was free, self-conscious, wholly purposed, all-absorbing, self-determining. This was simply a life of devoted realization of ideal character.

In the same sense, but unconditioned, the perfect self-determination of God must be thought of as absolute intent, devoted self-determination. No account can be given of the perceived facts upon which this inquiry began—namely, my own being and dependence—until I recognize that which is implied by them, namely, the source of all reality in action which is consciously and intentionally, infinite perfection. Thought, feeling, and will may be explicated from it, or may be affirmed of it, but neither nor all of these terms adequately express its own generic unity. It is the independent being devotedly realizing his own perfection. It is perfect devotement for the reasons that it is perfectly self-conscious, perfectly purposed, and perfectly free. It is simple devotement for the reason that it is unconditioned. Being unconditioned it is self-realizing. It is devoted achievement. The perfect devotement of any person is his supreme devotement; and hence the perfect devotement of an independent person is the perfect experience of infinite being.

But this is to say that God's nature is devotement to perfection in himself? Precisely! Hence, another corner stone in our system is,

III. *The nature of perfect action is perfect self-love.* Self-love, devotion to attaining one's best self, is not only the first right of being, but it is in finite persons the

worthy, and in the unconditioned person the infinitely worthy, devotement. Since in himself, alone, can unconditioned perfection be realized, supreme self-love in him is the infinite and infinitely worthy nature. In this there is the abiding realization of perfect egoism.

If it be suggested that an independent person might determine his own nature to be somewhat inferior to infinite perfection it must be admitted that the *consciousness* of being imperfect would condition and condemn his actual being. But this is an unthinkable proposition, for it proposes a contradiction which would require us to think of the independent as morally dependent, the unconditioned as conditioned, the inseparable unit as divided. It is self-evident that perfect self-determination must be conceived as a being of consciously infinite perfection.

*Selfishness* is a mode of self-determination which should be sharply discriminated. It is a form of devotion to one's self which is in detriment or antagonism to another. This implies that the one is related to that other, and is thus conditioned by him. Selfishness, therefore, cannot be thought except as relative and conditioned, and consequently can have no place in our thought of the perfect self-determination of the infinite being. Since perfect action, realizing perfect being, is not and cannot be in derogation of any other, his devotion to perfection in himself is purely self-love; it is the supreme devotement of perfect egoism.

We have no occasion to deny that infinite freedom can be thought as able to determine itself as a malevolent nature, but this would be to resign infinite freedom. Such a nature cannot be thought as realizing perfection of being, cannot be unconditioned. The nature of perfect action cannot be thought as other than devotement to

self-perfection, and this is independent self-love. The only conception of possible malevolence coming from the nature of perfect action, or being, must be that of an objective universe so related, or maladjusted, to the infinite self-love as to experience that relation as malevolent in its effect.

Self-love appears plainly as the nature of supreme self-determination when we regard it as devotion to perfection in one's self. In the perfect one it is perfectly, or infinitely, self-determining. In him it differs from self-love in man in that it is a self-established nature; not instigated nor influenced by any force or object external to himself, but is his self-determined nature.

Self-love *founds* the infinite ideal. It does not copy, obey, nor seek the infinite ideal as if subject to an obligation thereto, but it is that action the self-consciousness of which is the infinite ideal. In independent self-determination the infinite ideal is self-conscious in the infinite reality; hence, self-love, as the nature of the infinite, is the actualization of a perfect self, whose consciousness of himself is the infinite conception, or ideal.

I can conceive an ideal self which I may labor to attain actually. When I have actually realized this ideal it is no longer a conception which I seek to copy, but has become one with my self-consciousness, or consciousness of my self. But when we think of the unconditioned Person we necessarily think of an actual perfection that does not seek to attain, but is actually conscious of, infinite perfection. This consciousness of perfection, as in our thought we distinguish it from action, is the infinite ideal.

For the purposes of our thinking, an ideal may be contemplated as such whether it be the self-consciousness of perfect being or an unrealized conception. In me the

thought or ideal precedes the enacting, and it thereby conditions my action, but the perfect action is conscious of itself as perfect. This consciousness of its perfection is what we term the perfect thought in perfect action, the ideal in the real; but in fact both are real because one. In the highest generalization the infinite conception, or ideal, is the self-consciousness of perfect action, the infinite Person's knowledge of himself. From the foregoing considerations we give the following as our best definition of self-love: *Self-love is that kind of action which in an infinite being actualizes, in a finite being seeks to actualize, a perfect, or ideal, self.*

"The ideal" is a phrase which has especially two different applications. First, it is used to represent *the unreal*, that which is not actualized, or perhaps may be thought incapable of actualization. Hence, it is often applied to ideas, plans, or conceptions which are regarded as chimerical, utopian. Secondly, it has the sense of the *perfect* when applied to thought, plans, or mental conceptions. We may have a conception of a perfect house. This we term an ideal house, not merely because it is unreal, but because of its being as perfect as it is possible for thought, unembarrassed by the difficulties of realization, to conceive. But we designate this perfection as ideal to distinguish it from that perfection which characterizes an actualized, realized, or determined thing. When this ideal house is actually built it may be termed a perfect house. Hence, we speak of God as perfect because he is *actual* perfection; and of finite persons as seeking to realize an ideal self because their self-determination is a process toward realizing a conception, or ideal, of their best possible selves.

IV. *Self-love, by realizing a perfect egoism, founds perfect altruistic freedom.* Egoism which is determined

by independent self-love must be thought unsusceptible to impairment. When so thought this ego has no object to attain, nor attainable, greater than his own perfection. Secure in his perfect realization of being, he is able to lavish the excellence of being upon any and all objects which he may posit or create; that they may be the objective expression of such excellence—may be the sharers of that excellence, sharers with him whose perfection cannot be impaired through any possible extension or multiplication of finite being. Thus indiminishable in egoistic perfection, he alone is in a position to realize the "self-forgetfulness" of perfect altruism. He has no occasion to protect his own self-assured perfection. Perfect egoism is the only possible condition which can afford perfect altruism; and, hence, infinite self-love must be the only kind of action which is capable of altruistic perfection.

Not only is his nature the occasion, but must be thought the perfect self-assurance which, if he choose to act objectively, must warrant unreserved unselfishness; maintaining the highest egoistic self-consciousness throughout a perfect altruistic determination.

A powerful, expert swimmer, with apparent self-abandonment, plunges into the sea and rescues a drowning man. But what seems to inexpert observers as self-abandonment is, really, the fullest consciousness of his power as a swimmer. It is this full consciousness of his powers which frees him from attention to himself and enables him to concentrate his attention upon another. One less able must divide his attention between the safety of himself and that of the other; but perfect ability, perfectly devoted, is perfectly self-conscious in the self-forgetfulness of altruistic devotion to the rescue of the drowning one. The highest self-consciousness of the

swimmer is present in the highest self-consciousness of the rescuer. The swimmer and rescuer are one. Conscious perfection of either is in the perfect self-consciousness of the other. Thus perfection of being must be thought as a perfect egoism consciously capable of a perfect altruistic life. The independent devotement which realizes a perfect ego conditions in his own perfection a complete altruism. A perfect egoism is requisite to afford perfect altruism; and perfect *altruistic freedom* is the requisite exponent of perfect egoism, and the perfect determination of self-love is requisite to both. And this is why self-love is the only thinkable nature of that perfect action which is perfect being.

The conception of perfect being, then, is that of an ego so secure and independent in the realization of perfect being as to be free to limitless altruistic devotement.

V. *Self-love and love are, subjectively, one.* Self-love differs in no respect from love in the subjective nature or character of any being. Under either name it is the nature of supreme self-determination. Self-love is but a convenient term by which to confine attention to love's action when considered subjectively. The action is the same, and love is its simplest and most exact designation. Love is termed self-love when it is devoted to perfection in one's self, but since it may determine forms of manifestation objectively the term "self-love" becomes inappropriate. We offer the following as true definitions of the terms:

*Self-love is the action which is conscious of an ideal self which it, unconditioned, realizes; conditioned, seeks to realize. Love is that action which is conscious of an ideal which it, unconditioned, realizes; conditioned, seeks to realize.*

Thus it is seen they are subjectively the same—action

which realizes or seeks to realize an ideal of which it is conscious—but the term “self” must be dropped when the action is viewed in altruistic freedom and spirit. And this is true of love, whether in the infinite Person whose perfect self-determination founds the infinite ideal, or in man by whom an ideal self is objectively contemplated. My self-love, if pure, is devoted to the realization of an ideal character in myself. If I perceive evidences of that ideal character being realized in another person I love that person. My devotion to that ideal, my love of that character, is the same whether realized in myself or in another, although in the one case it is termed self-love, and in the other simply love. My supreme devotion to that other person may work the highest self-determination in me. I realize my highest self-love in my love of that person; and so long as my self-love derogates nothing from that other it is pure love toward him. If it derogate or detract from him it is neither love nor self-love, but selfishness. It is devotion to an actual self which rejects the ideal.

Supreme devotement is love, whether it be of an infinite or finite being. Whatever degree of devotement any being may have for himself or any other, whether respect, obedience, admiration, or love, his supreme devotement has no higher, fuller mode than love, devotion to the realization of the perfect. It may thrill the narrow conditions of an animal, may concentrate the self-determining powers of man, harmonize the aspirations of seraphs, or be the nature of the Infinite. Conditioned or unconditioned it is the actualization of its consciousness of the highest, best; simply and only love.

Greater simplicity, perhaps, in exhibiting love as the nature of perfect action may be attained by a regressive statement. For example:



1. Love when objectively manifested is beneficent altruism, benevolent, unselfish, or disinterested action toward others.

2. Infinite benevolence, or perfect altruism, can be actualized only by one in whom is perfect altruistic freedom.

3. Perfect altruistic freedom can exist only in perfect egoism.

4. Perfect egoism can be realized only in independent devotement to perfection of being.

5. Independent devotement to perfection of being is the nature of perfect action. Hence:

Love, which when objectively manifested is unselfishness, beneficent altruism, practical benevolence, is the nature of perfect action.

Every step of this statement is so transparent, and the leading back of love from the form of objective benevolence to love as perfect action so self-evident, that a further discussion of them would be superfluous.

The line of development which we have adopted, however, is not the regressive, but the progressive, method. This is briefly as follows:

The independent being whom, from my being and dependence I am compelled to recognize as the perfect reality, is perfect action; perfect action implies perfect self-consciousness; the self-consciousness of perfect action is the infinite ideal; action which has in it the consciousness of an ideal which it realizes is love; love's self-determination is an egoism that has in it perfect altruistic freedom—freedom to limitless benevolence; and, finally, devotement to the determination of being and perfect altruistic freedom are two characteristics of perfect action which afford in it the disposition, spirit, or spontaneity of perfect altruism, perfect unselfishness.

When the nature of perfect action is developed objectively no one can hesitate to recognize it as love. Yet it is equally clear that such development of love could never originate except in the nature of an infinite being. It is that action which founds in itself a perfect egoism which it devotedly realizes. Love is not necessarily related action, but is self-realizing; and has occasion for objects to love only as they may represent its own ideals, or may be instruments of their realization. Such occasion for objects of love is a need of only dependent beings. In the independent, love constantly actualizes conscious perfection.

VI. *Love is the grand involution of all qualities which must have their origin in independent action.* We can say of love, as of God, it is good, true, holy, and beautiful, but none of these qualities is love. We can explicate from love, as we do from perfect action, thought, wish, and will, but neither nor all represent its absolute singleness of act. Poets and orators have thrilled the world with their marvelous sayings *about* love, but when we would state what love *is* the difficulty is the same as that which is encountered in the effort to define the nature of the infinite, namely, the difficulty of representing action to which the relation of subject to object is not essential. The good, or goodness, in the sense of beneficence, the metaphysical sense, means no more than a practical quality or result. We may say, "Devotion to the perfect achieves the highest good," but this does not define perfect action. It only states one of its results or qualities; that is to say, devotion to perfection is of a good quality, for the reason that one of its results is the highest good. Thus "the good," in this exact sense, can only express a quality or result of this action, but it is not that action.

The moralist, in his generalization of positive qualities,

often rests in what he terms the "absolute good." But "absolute good," besides being an unintelligible expression, is and does no good except as it is founded as a quality or grouping of some of the qualities of perfect action; and then it is a quality, or set of the qualities, of love. Used in this moral or religious sense, "the good" simply stands for holiness, truth, and happiness, merely a group of qualities and results. In like manner holiness, beauty, and truth, severally, are in one way or other incident to perfect action, but none nor all of them give us the essential nature of this action. But love, which is not a property, quality, or result, is that self-determining action which founds those qualities and results.

Another traces the beautiful to "its source in the absolute ideal," but the "absolute ideal"—which can be beautiful only by being pleasurable—is an empty abstraction which cannot be pleasurable except as the consciousness of perfect action; and then it is love's consciousness of actualizing the perfect. Others make much of "eternal principles," but these can be clearly discriminated only as properties of perfect action, which thoroughly knows itself; and this is but the self-consciousness of infinite love.

As to the infinite ideal, we have seen it is simply the perfect being's consciousness of himself. Separated, in our thinking, from his action, it is the infinite ideal; it is that which men are groping after when they speak of "eternal principles." They fail to grasp it, and therefore deny it, because they seek a theoretic system instead of an ideal unit. Pilate failed to understand his august prisoner who bore witness "unto the (ideal) truth," the divine consciousness, hence he skeptically queried, "What is (theoretic) truth?" We recognize this consciousness of perfect being as the infinite self-consciousness of love; the infinite ideal in constant realization.

*The true*, or absolute truth, is, as we have seen, the infinite ideal. We cannot distinguish it from the consciousness of perfect action; and, as said before, this is identical with the self-consciousness of unconditioned, or infinite, love. Love has in it not only practical perfection, the good, but also the infinite ideal, the true.

An ideal is a conception of a unit from which ray out various qualities and implications which are implicit in this unit. The truths or principles thus implicit in this unit are dependent upon it, and have their significance only as implications of the ideal. "Eternal principles" are true only because the infinite ideal is the true; and they are eternal only because perfect action, the perfect being, is eternal. They bear no part in constructing the truth of that ideal, but are, themselves, constructed as phases or affirmations of it.

As an ideal is a unit it comprehends in unity that which may be analyzed or studied as its contents in severalty. A complete and systematic knowledge of these contents would be a theory, or science, of that ideal. The infinite ideal is truth in the sense of a simple unit in which is all theoretic truth. None but an infinite thinker, we must presume, can comprehend or understand the theory of the infinite ideal; that is, have a theoretic knowledge of absolute truth.

*Relative truth* arises with objective action on the part of God in establishing dependent being and its incident relationship; and then relative truth is right relation to, or harmony with, the infinite ideal. One may ask, skeptically, Might not truth have been constructed differently from what it is? Or, with that acute thinker, Mr. John Stuart Mill, he may suggest that truth, in some worlds, may be so different from what it is in this that "two and two may make five." Let such a one reflect that these

suggestions are the emptiness of folly unless there can be other than one infinite ideal ; unless there is other than one perfect consciousness of perfect action.

*Holiness*, or the holy, is the perfectness of intention in free action. Hence, the intended, or purposed, perfectness of perfect action is infinite, or perfect, holiness. It is that quality of perfect being which stands out to our thought when we contemplate the *intentionally* perfect self-determination of God. If his nature were necessitated it could have no moral quality. Or if it could be thought perfectly free, yet capricious, aimless, or fortuitous, it would be destitute of moral quality. But free self-determination is moral, and is perfectly righteous, or holy, because of its free intention in purposed perfection.

We have already recognized purpose, or intent, in love, the devoted nature of perfect action, and, hence, may affirm that *perfect holiness is the moral quality of the purposed perfectness of love*. When we say that God is holy we mean that he is *intentionally* perfect. Perfect personality, perfect egoism, is infinitely holy. Perfect action, being, egoism, personality, cannot be thought except as intentionally what it is, and wholly so. Hence, as we have seen before, perfect action is wholly ethical ; and its ethical quality is perfect, or infinite, holiness, since love is purely devotement to the perfect.

*Moral authority* arises in purposed perfection. The holy possesses an authoritative sentiment, which intentionally self-achieved perfectness imposes upon all other intentional action. Love, because of its perfection, is the criterion, standard, or authority which indicates what all other action ought to be. Figuratively, it is the wheel to which all other action must be adjusted in order to achieve its highest being and welfare. Hence a universe of dependent persons must find the true significance of

their being in conformity with love. If love act objectively in evolving a universe, for example, this action must impose the authoritative sentiment of holiness in all which it determines or conditions. Holiness, perfectness of intention, is imposed as the authority of an ideal which thus demands that it ought to be actualized. Though this objective action be subject to conditions, limitations, oppositions, or possible defeat, yet if it purpose the best, that purpose is perfect, and therefore holy. Perfectness of intention, the holy, has, then, the authoritative sentiment which love finds in all which it determines, conditioned or unconditioned.

Art aims to copy certain ideals in material forms, that is, seeks to copy mental conceptions. To the extent it succeeds in actually representing, on canvas or in marble, for example, these mental structures, termed ideals, the artist's work is said to approximate perfection. In the respects in which the material copy fails to fully represent the ideal, such material copy is defective. The ideal, therefore, is the criterion or authority according to which action approves or condemns itself.

Thus, also, in conditioned self-determination the action recognizes the ideal as the sacred authority which cannot be marred, however much the realizing action may fail to interpret or copy it. This sacredness of the ideal in the intention is one with the holy, that which is untarnishable. The copy or model may be defective, marred, or destroyed, but the ideal is unimpaired. Hence, the ideal personal nature or character is holy, though the enacted realization may be or may become unholy. But this authority of the ideal is not because of its *unreality*, but because of its *conceded perfection*.

But ideal perfection cannot be authoritative unless it is realizable, or has been actually determined. That is to

say, there can be no such reality as moral authority or obligation without there being somewhere the perfect realization of perfect thought, the perfect actualization of the infinite ideal; which is to say, that moral authority or obligation has, yes, must have, its origin in the ultimate oneness of perfect act and thought. I may picture to myself an ideal manhood up to which I would greatly desire to measure in practice, but I can feel no obligation to measure up to it nor condemnation for neglect or failure to actualize it if actual perfection nowhere exists, not even in God. And men would never dream of actualizing an ideal self but for the fact that its moral demand is pushed upon the conscience of each one of them by that One of actualized perfection who provides the conditions of their dependent being. This moral demand, or "moral imperative," commonly termed conscience, arises in the structure of the human soul without giving any account of itself other than that it is the sentiment of the Independent One; that intentionally self-achieved perfection which constantly realizes the infinite ideal, that perfect action, infinite love, which places and maintains in mankind the conditions to their intentional self-determination.

But the Independent, whose action maintains the structure of dependent persons, cannot impose this moral imperative unless he, himself, is actually perfect. Actual perfection, or perfect action, alone places the independent being in a position in which his nature imposes what *ought* to be the nature of all other action. If perfection could be nowhere determined, realized, enacted, there could be no such thing as moral authority. Authority based upon anything else than actual perfection is not moral. We err if we suppose, with Kant, that morality derives its authority from its being "capable of universal

utility." "Universal utility" is an assumption which cannot be verified, except by accumulating universal data; hence, without such data, it is a gratuitous assumption. The moral authority, which is perceived in that best self which each human being recognizes as what he ought to be, is precedent to any assumption of utility. It is the absolute sentiment of perfect intention evincing in us the actual perfection of the Being on whom our being depends. No moral authority can be thought or felt except as the imperative sentiment of perfect action. It is the authoritative sentiment of perfection which is founded in the nature of each dependent person by his sense of dependence upon the Independent.

God, by actualizing conscious perfection in himself, realizes absolute moral consciousness. Absolutely free to be as he is, the unconditioned One, or else to determine himself as falling short of infinite consciousness, short of realizing the infinite ideal, his purposely chosen perfection evinces his perfect holiness. Hence, love, his perfect action which purposely actualizes his perfection, establishes and maintains the authority of his perfect holiness.

We say of a man, "He has purposed the best," or, "He has not intended as well as he knows." We thus commend his moral character in the one case, or hold him blameworthy in the other; and to the full extent that he was free to purpose one way or the other. In precisely the same sense we must affirm of the nature of the unconditioned being that it is freely and intentionally self-determined perfection. It is therefore, a wholly moral nature, because wholly self-determined, wholly intentional, and perfect. He is subject to no necessity, no conditions. He is absolutely a law unto himself. In this conception of being we see that the unconditioned nature is thought unconditioned for two reasons, namely, it is



infinitely free, and intentionally perfect. Were that nature limited in freedom or lacking in intentional perfection it would be conditioned; hence, our conception of the unconditioned is that it is wholly an ethical, or moral, nature; that perfect action is purely ethical. The moral, the intellectual, and the æsthetic elements which are seen separate and to some extent independent of each other in man have their original oneness in the ethical nature of perfectly self-determined being. From above considerations we have another foundation stone:

VII. *Moral authority has its original ground in God's actual perfection.* This perfection is the ultimate moral authority to the universe, in both its creative and created elements, dependent and independent. To the dependent it is superimposed, to the independent it is self-realized and, hence, self-imposed. The infinite awe termed "the holy" is the authoritative sentiment of the perfect. The moral imperative in God or man is the authority of a realized, actual perfect. This sentiment has no efficiency to compel obedience, but cannot be ignored or disobeyed without a resulting degradation to the being who rejects it, though the sentiment abides unimpaired.

The holy is *authoritative* in that it imposes upon conditioned persons the obligation to be or do as in accordance with the perfect. Its authority is *practical*, since the person must experience defect or fault to the extent he neglects or rejects it. Its authority is wholly *moral*, for the reason that it does not compel attention nor obedience; the person may attend or neglect, obey or disobey, at will. Its authority is *independent* in that it is the self-sustained sentiment of perfect being. It is the sentiment of God, the absolute imperative, universally and for eternity. Hence, we must recognize the absolute ground

of moral obligation in the actual perfect; and, since the sentiment of holiness arises in actual or actualizable perfectness, it is clear that *free devotion to perfectness of intention, in God or man, is holy.*

Disobedience to the sentiment of the perfect, by choosing to determine his nature as beneath perfection, cannot be thought of the unconditioned person without thinking of him as having abandoned unconditioned being. For did he reject his conception of perfect being he must become conscious of not only self-degradation, but also of a moral authority over him in the rejected conception which, though abandoned, abides unimpaired as a realizable ideal; abides as the criterion of what he ought to be, and thus conditions and condemns him. Therefore, to think of the unconditioned nature, we must think of unconditioned action as purposely enacting a perfection in which holiness is founded and duty anticipated. Thus love, the unconditioned nature, *founds the holy as the quality of its intention.*

To say, What God ought to be he must be, expresses his holiness as imposed duty, which is erroneous. But to say, God is what an unconditioned person must be, implies absolute holiness as a natural quality of unconditioned being—a quality of infinite love. In man's dependent nature is the consciousness of an ideal self, obedience to which is duty, but supreme devotement to which is a love which anticipates duty.

*The beautiful* is that in perfectness which gives pleasure. As perfect action is not merely almightiness, but is perfectly adjusted action, it has that perfection of proportion which is intrinsic beauty. And as love is the action which constantly realizes the infinite ideal it is that perfectly adjusted action which is infinitely beautiful. Pleasure is derived from contemplating an ideal,

but especially from the achieving or possession of that ideal in realization. Doubtless there is satisfaction or appreciation derived in "the good" when it is attained in the practical realization of an ideal. But pleasure, rightly discriminated, results from such practical realization, not because it is good, but because of its perfectness. Perfectness, the fitting, whether ideal or real, thus distinguished as pleasurable, is the beautiful. The fact that perfection gives pleasure irrespective of practical good shows that the beautiful is a sentimental quality of the perfect; and that love, the perfect nature of God, has in it "the perfection of beauty."

That the beautiful arises as a quality or property of the perfect is further evinced in its close association with the holy—so close, indeed, as to make it almost a question whether it is not a subquality of the holy. As the origin of moral authority is found in the perfect, we find also in that authority the primary differentiation of pleasure and pain. Conscious self-degradation which comes of ignoring or disobeying the perfect has the absence of a positive pleasure, and also the presence of displeasure—in human terms, pain or agony. The necessary implication of intrinsic pain in the consciousness of self-degradation, by rejection of the perfect, implies the alternative that the realization of the perfect is the source of intrinsic pleasure. Hence, we conclude that love, the nature of perfect being, has, consciously, in it both the authoritative sentiment of holiness and the pleasurable sentiment of beauty. It is impossible to think of God as perfect being without thinking that he experiences infinite rapture.

*The good*, or goodness, though an expression often used in the sense of the perfect nature, falls short of expressing more than a quality of that nature. We may say, God is good; but not, The good is God. The latter

phrase expresses merely the empty abstraction of an impersonal deity. To say, The nature of God is good, is correct as to a single quality of his nature, but the good is not God, nor the nature of God. It is but one of the qualities which infinite love, his nature, founds. In like manner it may be said, he is holy, sublime, or all-wise, but these terms merely affirm certain qualities or manifestations of his nature. It cannot be made clear to thought that goodness, holiness, truth, or beauty is God or his nature. They are not, one nor all, identical in thought with love, his self-determining action; and for the reason, that love is action while they are but qualities of action. Since the good is only a quality of action, it is not real, except when determined by some reality. As a quality is nothing other than a property of some actual being, it is a chimera unless it is realized in action.

*Chief good* is the satisfaction of love. It is the highest practical excellence, or worth, of being; the highest practical satisfaction of the perfect nature to himself, and of finite beings to themselves, individually and as a whole. Being, alone, has positive good. Nonbeing, or nonexistence, is nothing, contains no possibilities, is worthless. It cannot be thought good in any but a negative sense; in which it may be deemed a less evil than abused, self-degraded being. But it cannot be a positive good, although there may be modes of being which, by their own determination, are so evil as to be worse than worthless. Any type or mode of being which has in it a satisfaction, interest, or possibility better than nonbeing has the quality of goodness; and any such being which realizes perfection of its type attains its chief good. Hence, "chief good" signifies the highest practical satisfaction or worth of true being; and it is, therefore, correct to affirm of the perfect Being that he realizes infinite good.

Since the possibility of good can be thought only of being, it subsists for dependent beings in two factors, namely, the conditions of such beings, and their self-determination in the use of these conditions. Hence, the good of finite being must, also, be achieved subjectively.

For the independent being the possibilities for good are in but one factor, self-determination. Inasmuch as the unconditioned person must be thought as realizing infinite being, his being must found the infinite good. The infinite good, then, is not identical with love, but is love's satisfaction, a practical quality, or property, of absolute perfection.

But all these qualities, the true, the holy, the beautiful, and the good, must each and all be but illusions unless they are enacted; each and all must be merely conventional unless they are founded in independent action. If they are nowhere so realized it must remain an open question whether they are real or realizable. Hence, without action of a nature which realizes them as its qualities they must remain in the region of myth. Since a quality is nothing but a property of action, the "highest good" can mean nothing other than the highest practical worth of being. "Absolute truth," the consciousness of perfect being, the infinite ideal, cannot be essential truth except as realized in perfect personality. We may say that relative truth is harmony with absolute truth, but both are only as our minds construe things unless absolute truth is realized in perfect action. So, also, the holy would be a superstition and beauty a dream unless founded in actual perfection.

It is equally plain that unconditioned action cannot realize them, as obeying or seeking them as objects; for in that case such action would be conditioned by them, and hence could not be the unconditioned nature. There-

fore, action which can realize these infinite qualities must be thought of as the action which *founds* them.

But, inasmuch as the fact of my own dependent being pushes upon me the fact of the independent, and the independent must be unconditioned, or perfect, being, and perfect being is perfect action, and perfect action is love, nothing can be thought more real than that perfect nature, love; whose practical satisfaction is the supreme good, whose self-consciousness is absolute truth, whose authoritative sentiment is the holy, and whose infinite beauty is the fountain of limitless pleasure.

Love is not to be classed with these qualities, but is that unconditioned action in which they are founded. Love is the only kind of action which we can think capable of unconditioned perfection; hence, it is our only possible conception of the nature of an unconditioned being. Any other kind of self-determining action falls into conditions; love, alone, is sufficient to itself. It is independent, infinite. It is at once the conception and the achievement of the infinite reality—perfect being, rejoicing in infinite truth, goodness, holiness, and beauty. Love, independently realizing perfect being, immutably self-assured, gives those qualities living, permanent reality.

Moreover, it is not only unconditioned, but, as such, is capable of being all-conditioning action. While it is the fullness of self-assured perfection, it is adequate to conceive, realize, and sustain a perfect system of dependent being, evermore. Only that which is perfect, independent self-determination can be thought to be the primary conditioning power. And since love is the nature of the unconditioned it is the nature of that action which establishes original conditions, the force which originates action and assigns its laws.

Love is the answer to the question raised in the former part of this chapter, "What kind of a being is He?" It is that which realizes perfect being. It affords the only and ample occasion for an objective creation, and renders to each dependent person a full account of one imperious fact—his own dependent, yet self-determining, being. Reality is action, action is life, perfect action is love!

Thus, by following the order in which our knowledge naturally arises, beginning with the perceived facts, as given in self-perception and sense-perception, these, under the hand of reason, take the form of definite conceptions which become crystallized convictions which we must affirm, namely:

I. Perfect action, conscious and infinitely free, is the highest generalization, the primary unit, the unconditioned nature of independent being.

II. Perfect action is perfectly intentional.

III. The nature of perfect action is perfect self-love, realizing a perfect ego.

IV. Self-love, by realizing perfect, that is, infinite, egoism, founds perfect, that is, limitless, altruism.

V. Self-love and love are, objectively, the same.

VI. Love founds all those qualities which must be thought as originating in independent action.

VII. Moral authority has its original ground in God's actual perfection.

These affirmations outline a conception of the unconditioned One, but a philosophic conception of being which can satisfy reason must include conditioned being also. For convenience we deal with this in a separate chapter, though it is but a continuance of this inquiry into "being, as conceived."

## CHAPTER III

### BEING, AS CONDITIONED

In Him we live, and move, and have our being.—*Saint Paul.*

THE implications of being have forced upon us the conception of an unconditioned person whose nature is love; action which is a simple unit, at once the consciousness and realization of infinite, perfect being—perfectly self-conscious in perfect self-determination. Self-conscious, it is the supreme devotement of self-determining act.

We have been compelled, also, to recognize in this conception a life which is a perfect ego, capable of perfect altruism, or, in other words, an egoism which is perfectly self-dependent and self-assured, and is therefore perfectly free to evince his changeless perfection by unreserved devotion to other beings. This unreserved devotion to others is what we mean by "perfect altruism"; a manifestation, the highest and clearest, of independent egoism. It is a love which implies such perfect consciousness of egoistic independence that it can manifest its ineffaceable perfection in all the abandon of an unreserved external devotement; a manifestation which is an eternal beneficence and an infinite glory.

*Altruistic freedom*, let us term this feature of infinite love. Failure to grasp this characteristic of perfect being, we suspect, has been a vitiating weakness in much of the philosophizing of the past. It has rendered thinkers unable to think their way out from an unconditioned God to a conditioned universe which is objective to God. They have argued that, to human thought, a finite universe



which is originated by an infinite, or unconditioned, being is a contradiction. Hence, they have either denied the reality of an objective universe, which denial is pantheism, or they have failed to affirm the reality of the unconditioned being, which is atheism, or, like the school of Sir William Hamilton, they have denied that God can be an object of human thought.

We are not unaware that the difficult question of conditioned being is: Can the unconditioned be thought to erect objective being, without himself becoming conditioned? And, further, Becoming conditioned, can he be thought as abiding in unconditioned self-consciousness; or must he pass into *conditioned* self-consciousness, and so subside as an unconditioned being?

To these questions it were sufficient to answer:

1. He assumes these conditions by himself establishing them; a thing which only an unconditioned being can be thought able to do; for the bottom question of philosophy is, What is that force which has originated action and assigned its laws?

2. The same independent self-determination which can be thought without them must be thought self-conscious in the action which founds and sustains dependent being. The facts that he consciously establishes the conditions to objective being, and that this objective action is wholly determined by him, keep before our thought his abiding consciousness of his unconditioned nature.

It is certainly plain that human thought is conditioned, but how this argues that an unconditioned being cannot be thought by us as acting in relation to an object has not been shown. That we are unable to discriminate that an absolutely self-determined being can *conceive of relationship* and act in relation to objects, without our losing the conception that he consciously and perfectly

determines his own action, is certainly an unwarranted surrender of reason. True, he must be thought as a subject who is related to an object, but he must be thought as the consciously independent subject whose nature is absolutely self-determined, and who is independent in choosing to establish that object. If the conditioned nature of human consciousness were wholly the result of man's objective action we might be prone to think that the divine self-consciousness might, similarly, be the effect of his objective action. But there is not even this ground for our thinking that his objective action must efface the self-determined nature or consciousness of God. If a human being could by any means attain to unconditioned action or thought it does not follow that his consciousness of that nature wherein he is conditioned and dependent would be lost. It would only show that he has determined in himself a mode of knowing and acting distinct from his relative and conditioned mode. Can we not clearly think of an independent being who, though consciously unconditioned in the determination of his own nature, may determine in himself a relative mode of knowing and acting without his being dependent upon it? The only valid conclusion of this matter is that we must think of God's nature as consciously independent, unconditioned, absolutely perfect, and also capable of forming a conception and maintaining a consciousness of any or all possible relations, conditions, and dependent objects.

Moreover, much of the difficulty of this question results either from a confused or whimsical use of the terms "infinite," "unconditioned," "absolute," etc. Most of these thinkers fail to perfectly emancipate their thought of the infinite from the notion of quantity. Hence it is not surprising that they cannot think of the infinite with

the finite "superadded," forsooth. But quantity is identical, in thought, with limitation; hence, a quantitative infinite is unthinkable and absurd. "The infinite," in our thought, is perfectly free action; "the unconditioned" is action which is without means or conditions, hence perfectly independent; "the absolute" is action which is perfectly self-dependent, perfectly self-determined, in relation to nothing in its self-determination. All come to the same, the independent. These terms can be strictly applied to only perfect action and its qualities; hence, only to a perfect person and his traits.

But these terms do not, in strict use, apply to his objective action, as thought by us, but only to an ego whose action is perfectly self-determined in unrestricted freedom. And when we think of his determining a relative mode of consciousness in himself that consciousness is dependent upon him, not he upon it. Relation which may subsist between him and this relative mode of knowing and acting has no previously conditioning influence upon his determination of his infinite nature, but simply expresses the form of his act in determining the existence of that mode. He is consciously independent whether in omitting, establishing, or dismissing finite conceptions, conditions, and relations. They are incident to his determination of altruism; and altruism is dependent upon egoistic perfection. If his altruistic determination could be thought as in some way at the expense of egoistic perfection, or as an abridging of infinite perfection in himself, there might be some ground for the position taken in Hamilton's philosophy of the unconditioned. But since love may exercise unrestrained benevolence *because* of its constantly realized self-perfection there appears nothing in its objective action to modify its unconditioned self-realization. All that Hamilton's school can validly

affirm is that the determination of divine altruism, or benevolence, must be conditioned. This we affirm in advance by having said that, while altruistic *freedom* is implicit in independent love, the determination, realization, carrying out of altruism must be by objective action, and, therefore, must be thought as conditioned. But none can deny that love abides egoistically perfect, the independent realization of the infinite ideal, even when it determines conditioned benevolence.

An egoism which is perfect action must be thought unsusceptible to impairment; and such egoism alone can have perfect altruistic freedom, which is the essential condition to a benevolence which is perfect in kind and limitless in degree. An immutably perfect ego, only, can be thought as infinitely free or as possessing perfect objective freedom. Hence, perfection of being must be thought as a perfect egoistic life which is perfectly free to a perfect altruistic life. It is requisite to the notion of a perfect ego that there is nothing in himself that is short of perfect freedom to act objectively, to freely choose what he will do, and in what method and according to what plan, if any, he will act.

Our thought of the perfect freedom of God's nature is quite a different conception from that of his objective action. The former is independent, absolute; the latter is relative and conditioned. Altruistic freedom to act is in the former; altruistic action is the latter. Altruistic freedom is perfect freedom to act objectively, or not, as the independent being may choose. If he choose to act objectively our thought of his independent nature is not changed, we simply think of his objective action as relative and conditioned. Hence, we must conclude that the question of harmonizing absolute being with his objective, relative action is a question of differing modes of

consciousness in God—the absolute consciousness and the relative consciousness; thus carrying the question back into the independent nature, where it belongs. ·

If we bear in mind that the aim of human philosophizing cannot be to discover “how being is made,” but that its true object is to form a conception which harmonizes and unifies the facts of being, we may get on with this question of absolute and relative modes of consciousness in God. It is not our task to show *how* they subsist, but to keep our thoughts clear of contradictions and weakness while we recognize the fact that they do subsist.

The positions of all systems of thought, ancient and modern, which have failed here have taken for granted that such contradiction is unavoidable. Their position is substantially this: The consciousness of relation, in God, must cancel his consciousness of absolute being. This is but a gratuitous assumption. They who hold to the doctrines of nescience must make good this assumption before they can rationally advance their theories.

*Relative consciousness*, or consciousness of relation, is one's knowledge of being in relation to other things or thoughts. The absolute consciousness is that which can be and be known of itself without the existence of any thing or thought other than itself; independent of relationship. Nothing can realize this latter definition except a force which is perfectly conscious of itself as perfectly self-determined reality. Hence, the absolute one is the only consciously and perfectly self-determined unit. It is unnecessary and absurd to think that this unit must forfeit or abate his consciousness of his own nature because of any *conceptions* which he may have of any or all other modes of being.

Further, he must be thought less than perfect if he is not conscious of every possibility and implication of

thought or act, or of every significance and minutia of *a theory of his own being*. This is the same as saying that he must be less than independent if he cannot be conscious of a perfect relative conception; and he must be thought less than perfect being if he cannot be conscious of such theory or conception without losing consciousness of himself as the perfectly self-determined unit. Then, what ground is there for saying that if he act objectively, project a universe, for example, in accordance with this conception, he can no longer be thought as existing in all perfection, independent of all objective action, condition, or relation? His objective action cannot be thought to exist without him, but he must be thought as perfect being, independent of its existence. In a word, he cannot be thought to exist in external activities except as dependent upon internal perfection. This internal, or egoistic, perfection is realized in absolute self-consciousness. All comes to this: He is absolutely self-determined; hence, in our thought, his nature abides consciously absolute, and as independent of all external action which, however vast, he may choose to put forth.

VIII. *God's determination of relative consciousness in himself appears in his freedom to form a relative conception, and thus consciously differentiate thought and thing.* We emphasize the above statement as a foundation stone of our system for the reason that this *differentiation* is logically, as we must see, the true "beginning," the origin of duality and relational order.

Is it not clear to our reason that the absolute unit, the perfectly independent person, who in infinite freedom determines his own nature, is also free to form a conception of relation? If he cannot, he cannot be thought capable of any mode of knowledge except self-consciousness, and this only as he acts it in the one mode of action,

the absolute. This would be an infinite freedom which is under a finite necessity to think or do nothing less than infinite things. That is, he is shut up to a necessity—is neither independent nor infinite.

The ruling fallacy of this whole matter is in thinking of God's nature as being subject to modification by his objective thought or act, and thus dependent upon these in the same sense in which our dependent nature is gradually developed and modified by interaction with external forces—a veritable anthropomorphism. But the only clear thought of his nature is that it is absolutely self-determined, and this nature is self-conscious in positing any thought or action which he wholly determines, and which is wholly dependent upon him. It is a degrading anthropomorphism to suppose that he cannot even conceive of aught less than himself without modifying his absolutely self-determined nature, as human thoughts and doings modify human character. But the one is independent being, the other is dependent becoming.

Can the being who is a perfect person conceive of any other than perfect action? Only an affirmative to this question is thinkable. Yet this answer decides the entire question of conditioned being; for, the moment we recognize that the being who is the unit of act and thought *conceives* that which is other than absolute self-determination we thereby accept the fact that he is conscious of distinguishing this conception from the action which may give it determination. If we clearly recognize this we can easily see that he is able to view thought and act severally, as concept and content, ideal and reality, and related to each other as such. In a word, God, the self-conscious unit of act and thought, may be regarded as also conscious of thought and act as dual, separate, and correlated.

And since in his perfect nature there is perfect altruistic freedom, he may be thought as conceiving a perfect altruistic scheme. Such a scheme is a conception of an objective universe, and implies a universe of dependent persons who shall be objects of his action and beneficiaries of his altruism. Their personality, however, implies that, within conditions, they shall be self-determining; and this is the same as to say that his conception of a universe is a scheme of thought which, in part, depends upon others to make it an actual thing.

This differentiation of thought and its actualization is consciousness of form, as distinguished from the action which shall determine it, and consciousness of their relation each to the other. It implies consciousness of the relative, the limited, the conditioned; *a relative consciousness*. There is nothing in the nature of human reason to prevent our affirming that God, as the absolute unit, determines in himself the consciousness of distinction and relation between thought and thing.

The determined relative consciousness is a dependent result. Hence, the relative consciousness in God is determined by his independent, perfect action, love. This is the initiative of relation and plurality; logically the true beginning, or founding, of conditioned existence. It is also the origin of limitation, or quantity, and the starting-point of succession.

This determination of a dependent mode of consciousness in God implies that he may, in his infinite freedom, determine in himself many distinct modes of consciousness, all consciously dependent; yet in his absolute nature he is self-conscious as the independent founder of all.

The two modes of consciousness, the absolute and the relative, stand boldly out to our reason because of our unavoidable recognition of (1) the absolute nature of the



independent self-determination of God, and (2) his determination of his relative consciousness, implied in his conception of relationship—the absolute self-consciousness not conditioned by or dependent upon the relative, but abiding in its distinct mode of being. The relative is posited by and dependent upon the absolute. It is the child of the independent, “the begotten of the Father”; and, so far as we can know or think, “the only begotten.”

IX. *In the order of God's relative consciousness is the going forth of his objective action.* Hence, the creation of an objective universe must be thought as the action of God according to his relative consciousness—the action of “the only begotten.”

1. We must think of the independent as at once unconditioned and yet free to be ever in process of relative self-determination. The consciousness of this relative self-determination we have designated “the begotten,” the formal expression, “the Logos.” Nor can we see any violence to thought or language in designating this mode of conscious self-determination by the term “person.”

2. The relative consciousness in God is the nexus between the infinite and the objective finite; the bridge by which our thought passes out from the infinite unit to the finite many. To find this passage has been the grand effort and failure of philosophy in ancient and modern times. No triangulation of regressive thought has ever been able to span this chasm.

3. The relative consciousness in God is the *primus* of serial being, the first in the order of succession, the primary consciousness of conditioned being. It is the real beginning, the “Word” that was “with God” and “was God.” “The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”

4. But we find this the *logical* beginning, simply, not attempting to assign it a chronological date. We can assign no period when the Absolute One refrained from objective action. But we must, nevertheless, think of his conception of relation and conditions as dependent though eternal; and therefore the relative consciousness must be thought as only logically subsequent to and dependent upon the absolute.

Perhaps a more difficult question from our point of view is: Can love be thought as perfect action without altruistic determination; can love be complete without practical benevolence? This question, however, is answered in a former chapter substantially as follows: Love, or supreme devotement to perfection, is complete whether as self-love it realizes perfection, independently, or as benevolence, indirectly. The difficulty which attends the effort is to see this is a certain anthropomorphism which regards love as not complete unless it is lavished upon some object. Because men need an object to love, as an instrument through which to realize their ideal, and thus experience their highest self-determination, purged of selfishness, we are apt to regard God as in need of a similar process by which to realize his own perfection. In man the same need of objects is experienced in every department of self-realization, physical, emotional, mental, and moral; but the independent needs no indirect or related method by which to realize perfection in himself. Love is complete as devoted realization of the perfect, whether that realization be wrought directly or indirectly, with or without instrumentality. Perfection in God must be thought as directly self-determined, while man's perfection is determined by his devotement to an object which represents this perfection. Infinite love realizes the infinite ideal in itself. If the independent

being choose to form a conception of a perfect system of dependent being, that conception must be thought as dependent upon him and conditioned by him; it is a conditioned conception, while his nature is unconditioned. Perfectly self-determined being must be thought as perfectly unconditioned love; and must be thought such before he can be thought capable of perfect altruism. If we but bear in mind that love is purely self-determining action we cannot fail to see that its highest mode is subjective, egoistic. And if we strictly adhere to this pure notion of love, the supreme devotement of perfect self-determination, we shall have no difficulty in seeing that in an independent being it must realize perfect self-determination without need of objective instrumentality.

Perfect self-determination must be thought absolute in knowledge and power; hence, can actualize perfection directly, not conditioned by time, space, or means. It is not dependent upon objects of love as indirect means of realizing perfection. Dependent persons, such as we are, must be led to apprehend our ideal self and actualize it in our highest determination of character by means of altruistic methods. "We must lose our lives that we may find them." All our love for others reacts to achieve our best selves, and thus proves to be pure self-love purged of selfishness. And this pure self-love, which is the best possible for ourselves, is realized by our being the best possible for others. This exhibits the subjective oneness of love and self-love—exhibits the unselfish freedom of a perfect self-love, pure altruism.

But as the independent self-love of God is directly self-determined, it is independently the best for himself, and independently capable of being the best for a dependent universe. Hence, it is clear that altruistic determination in an objective creation has nothing to do with develop-

ing love as the nature of God—is not a necessity nor a condition to God's egoistic perfection. But, on the contrary, his perfect being in its independent altruistic freedom is the condition and opportunity which account for the objective nature of the universe; account for the universe as other than God. Love, the only thinkable nature of an unconditioned being, affords, in its perfect altruistic freedom, the only thinkable condition which is adequate to the projectment of objective being. Here we shake off the last shred of pantheistic philosophy, Hindoo, Greek, and German.

Pantheism is but a confession of inability to think one's way out from infinite to finite being; and hence surrenders the solution of finite being and stultifies the individual self-consciousness of man. Whether as a theory that the universe is God, or God is the universe, or that God and the universe are necessarily coexisting phases of being, it cannot be held without contradiction. According to pantheism there is either no independent or no dependent being. Its teachers have failed to recognize unconditioned being as perfect action, failed to see that perfect action is perfectly devoted self-realization, failed to recognize this as infinite self-love, and failed to see that infinite self-love *has infinite altruistic freedom*; is infinite love and implies the infinite freedom of perfect unselfishness. They have made their failures by regarding the universe as in some way necessitated; regarding the infinite as in some way impelled or driven to methods of phenomena to attain self-consciousness. They have dragged the infinite into finite conditions, yet have accounted for nothing; or, like Fichte, have concluded that being is but a dream and human knowledge "but the dream of a dream."

The first thing to account for is the fact of finite being,

the individual self-perception of man, not the reason why man or the universe exists, but the condition upon which they can exist. We find this condition to be the *perfect altruistic freedom* of that independent self-love which is the nature of God; a freedom which neither abridges, impels, nor determines, but illustrates infinite self-love, the unconditioned nature of an ego whose perfection is not susceptible to impairment through endless altruistic determination. We find in this unconditioned love no necessity nor compulsion to altruistic benevolence. Compulsion would cancel benevolence. We find nothing in God's objective action that is a condition to his perfect self-determination. We find, simply, an infinite love which needs no indirect methods by which to achieve perfect self-determination as man needs, but which in its direct, unrelated, independent realization of perfect being is perfection for himself, and is, hence, capable of perfect beneficence to others; and this love is identical, in its egoistic independence, with perfect self-love, the self-sustained egoism which is adequate to endless altruism. This is perfect altruistic freedom, as implied in infinite egoistic love.

We have said that a perfect, that is, a perfectly free, altruism is, to our thought, the highest exponent of egoistic perfection. But this does not imply that egoistic perfection is determined by means of it; but it does imply that egoistic perfection is self-sufficient, self-secure, infinitely free to determine love's altruistic benefaction, without subjective reserve, forever. Thus love appears to our thought as determining a higher and a lower life—the higher life of independent being, the lower life of finite self-determination in relation to dependent being. The higher is the perfection of unconditioned, the lower is the perfection of conditioned, consciousness.

Then let it be steadily held in view that the grand demand upon our system of philosophy is to account for our personal existence; and that this fact is accounted for in finding in independent self-love the *freedom* to create or not create; and in either case to be self-determined perfection in himself. The perceived fact of our dependent existence evinces that he chooses to create; his freedom so to choose offers a full account of our existence—a full account of “being, as conditioned.”

The reason why he chooses to create dependent being is not concerned in this question, nor in any way needed that we may see the coexistence of conditioned with unconditioned action in God, or the coexistence of conditioned beings with the unconditioned One. “The reason why” concerns the intention, or meaning, of our existence, but not the fact. Doubtless, pantheistic theories are prompted from supposing that dependent being must be accounted for by showing some necessity for it, and hence place that necessity in a necessitated unit which may be termed either God or universe, and of which dependent beings are but temporary phenomena. Thus self-conscious, dependent beings, which is the grand problem to be solved, is not solved, but ignored.

Now that we see in self-love’s perfect self-determination the freedom of the unconditioned ego to determine an objective system of being, in harmony with that love, we might offer the implied reason why he chooses so to do. But we defer this to the discussion of “Implications of Love,” Part Second.

X. *The Altruistic Spirit.* It is impossible for us to think of that Person who is immutably perfect—perfect for the infinite good and pleasure of his own being, and perfect to afford the highest good of other possible beings—without our recognizing in him the spontaneity, dispo-

sition, or spirit, of infinite benevolence; a spirit prompting him to determine objective conditions upon which may arise any and all forms of being that may realize a beneficent existence.

But to be more explicit: We have seen that love, the nature of God, is supreme devotement to perfection of being. Take this with its realization of perfect freedom to limitless altruistic determination, and the fact stands out to our view that his nature, love, is devotement to all being in which it may realize an ideal. Hence, we must recognize in love a *tendency* or disposition to such action as can realize an ideal objective life—indeed, an objective life which may comprehend all ideals which may contribute to the realization of perfect objective being. This tendency or disposition is one sense in which the word “spirit” is used; it is a synthetic expression of all the several subjective qualities, as the flame leaps up blending the various elements of combustion in one towering pillar of fire.

The term “spirit” is used in at least two different senses: First, it means self-determining in which the consciousness of personality resides. The term has this sense in the sentence, “God is a Spirit.” Secondly, the term “spirit” represents the general sentiment or expression of the character of a person; or the disposition, tendency, or spontaneity which, as a whole, expresses his nature. This is the general outflow, or spontaneity, in which every trait of the nature and character is represented, not in severalty, but as a whole.

Therefore, since love is devotion to perfection of being, and experiences the practical good of love-determined being, and enjoys perfect freedom to all altruistic tendency, it follows that it has the general sentiment of devotion to the accomplishment of all possible forms of love-

determinable beings. Take the practical good which God knows there is in the satisfaction of love, and the practical good to other beings which love may secure in the realization of the several ideals which may be comprehended in an ideal objective life as a whole, and we have the *benevolent* element in love's altruistic tendency. This altruistic tendency, or spontaneity, is the altruistic spirit in the second above-described sense of the term "spirit"; a benevolent sentiment, expression, or spontaneity flowing out from love, the divine nature.

But this is only a *spontaneity*, not a *determination* unless it *consciously prompts* toward objective action. If it so prompts, instigate, it is then a form of self-conscious determination, a definite personality; an objectively self-directed energy; "the altruistic spirit" in the sense of a self-determined person.

But now, if we think of this altruistic spirit as an intentionally exercised determination or prompting toward objective exploitation, we must discriminate it as the rise of a definite form of consciousness, determined by the independent one, and distinguished by at least two well-defined characteristics. These are (1) conscious sentiment for, and contemplation of, an objective life; and hence, because related to an object, must be distinguished from the absolute consciousness of the perfectly self-determined one. (2) Self-consciousness as a concrete prompting or urging sentiment; hence, because concrete and informal, it is distinct, in thought, from any formal consciousness, as, for example, that of the Logos, the Son. We cannot escape the affirmation that a definite prompting of the divine nature toward objective action—action which shall be related to possible or real objects—is a consciously *related* prompting, and is consciously other than love's prompting in subjective self-determina-



tion; the former is *relative*, the latter *absolute*. And equally unavoidable is it that this definite prompting, yearning sentiment, becoming self-conscious in the spontaneity of the divine nature and instigating to an objective demonstration, is informal and is, therefore, distinct from the formal consciousness which has been termed the Logos, or Son. These characteristics cannot, in clear thinking, be affirmed of the absolute, on the one hand, nor of the son, on the other; hence, reason requires the recognition of the personal consciousness of the altruistic Spirit.

If, according to the prompting of this spirit, God actually creates dependent objects, then, we must think, the altruistic spirit is definitely self-conscious in all his objective action—self-conscious in love, prompting and urging its fullest objective development.

This prompting to objective being has in it, of course, love's devotion to perfection, love's enthusiasm for actualizing the ideal. Hence, it is the prompting of *intentional perfection*, albeit of conditioned perfection. It is the intent to realize a perfect objective life. And since the holy is one with perfectness of intention, or intended perfectness, its prompting is wholly to perfectness in all objective action. Although the working-out of love's ideal objective life may involve a vast amount of weakness, defeat, delay or opposition to its perfect determination, the spirit which prompts to it must be thought true to the ideal, in its intent, throughout all the vicissitudes of the realizing process. Hence, the altruistic spirit is distinctively a *holy spirit*. Although the objective, conditioned system of being may involve much of imperfection before its perfection is attained, the spirit which urges it is holy so long as it does not demand or approve a departure from righteousness or the infliction of essential ill upon any

being in order to condition the ultimate success. We have seen in the preceding chapter that intending, or purposing, the perfect is the holy in God, and intending a best or true self is holiness in a finite person; hence, we can readily see that the Spirit of God which prompts to the conditioned perfection of God's objective action is aptly termed the "Holy Spirit."

We discern, then, in our discrimination of the altruistic spirit of love, that his prompting will be an *authoritative sentiment* at every point in conditioned being where self-determining intention shall arise—an authoritative sentiment urging to intentional devotion to the realization of the ideal, the true life. This sentiment of holy intention must abide as a moral condition to every intention, divine or human, which bears upon the determination of personal character or the attainment of essential good.

Whether, then, we think of God's objective action as creating and arranging primal chaos, or adjusting the conditions of the nicest shades of human responsibility, or witnessing his acceptance of human faith and fealty, there must be thought the self-determined presence of the altruistic spirit, urging holy intention in all conditioned being.

The conclusion to which this matter comes is that we identify the "moral imperative" in man, termed the authority of conscience, with the authoritative sentiment of the altruistic or holy spirit which in God's infinite nature prompts to objective holiness and benevolence, and is self-evident as the moral authority which conditions man's conscious intentions. Since he does not determine formal thought or action in man or in the objective universe, we must think of him as an animus, spirit; and as he does not necessitate obedience, but merely imposes a moral sentiment as a condition of approval or disap-

proval of intentions, he is purely moral in his prompting.

*The determination of altruism* is necessary to give it objective reality. Without such determination divine altruism must be thought as simply comprising an infinite altruistic freedom and the altruistic spirit. It is nothing more than the *occasion* for objective action unless God shall choose to realize it in objective fact. Thus there is involved in love the original possibility of objective reality. And, upon further consideration, we may see that it implies motive to the creation of real objects. But since it is clear that we need not think the self-determined nature of the perfect being is changed or affected by his conceiving or founding objects, we must regard God as at once unconditioned and yet free to be ever in process of relative self-determination.

Pantheism cannot realize altruism. A universe which is not objective to the power which projects it is not a universe, but an ego; does not realize objective realities. Love, which realizes perfect being in God and hence can afford unrestrained altruistic action, implies in that action objects of its benevolence which shall be consciously other than the unconditioned being—objects toward which, also, the Unconditioned shall realize that he establishes, or posits, them as external to himself. This is his conditioning of externality.

A point in God's action where he erects conditions from which may arise a spontaneous self-conscious act, other than God's act, is a realization of externality; and is action which must be thought as objective to God. That self-conscious external action gives individual unity to the group of conditions upon which it has arisen. This actor, or agent, who shall thus act originally—that is, for himself—consciously choosing to do or be this or that, or in any way originating change in and of himself,

becomes thereby conscious of himself as a being other than God; and God is thereupon conscious of a person external to himself.

This new self-conscious being may not be definitely conscious of God's conditioning action which constitutes his nature, nor apprehend how his own power to act for himself arises, but he is conscious of acting for himself. This definitely self-conscious agent, who, though dependent, is conscious of selfhood as an individual actor, self-determining in his conditions, is a real object, external to God, which meets the demand of divine altruism. In him divine love realizes actual altruism. Love's benevolence finds a real object and, acting in relation to him, is consciously beneficent. It is only a universe of such self-conscious though dependent beings that can be such a universe as the free altruism of God implies.

Although we might suppose the existence in the mind of God of a concept of a perfect universe, this concept could not be the determination of altruism until such concept became an objective reality; until a person or persons, definitely other than himself, were established. This otherness must consist in a definite though dependent ego—a real being who is a self-conscious actor. He may be conscious of action which is not his own, and yet conscious of his own self-originated action; and also that it is the one same consciousness which distinguishes the action which is self originated from that which is not his own. I am conscious of charming sensations of sight and sound which arise in me by no choice or act which I exert; but I can avoid their charm by choosing to divert my attention from them, and thus, by my own act, consciously ignore them. Not only do I distinguish self-originated action from action posited within me, but I abide the same individual, perceiving and purposing and

remembering past perceptions and purposes. This finite ego, my self-perceived being, is conditioned, rendered possible, by that class of action termed above "not my own." It is action which is established by a power other than myself. It is my nature; but in the action which I originate I am self-conscious and free, appropriating and modifying my nature, building upon it or of it my self-determined personality.

It is of no consequence to ask *how* original action arises spontaneously upon certain posited conditions, or how the passage from spontaneous to self-determining action is made; for that is but to ask *how* being comes to be—a question which is impenetrable to human thought, and, besides, has no weight as against the perceived facts of spontaneous action all around us and self-determination within us, arising upon posited conditions.

God's objective action is *conditioned* action; conditioned by him as the subject who acts toward an object, and also conditioned by the object of his action; thus establishing the relation between subject and object. His relative consciousness founds *succession*, and is, logically, the beginning point of successive events. Hence divine love, when devoted to others, can be realized as conditioned. Until altruism is so realized it can be thought only as the altruistic spirit. Only by objective action can it find determination. Without this it is benevolence that is not beneficent. For an objective universe there is ample scope in the altruistic freedom of divine love; but its determination must always imply conditioned action. God must be conscious of acting under conditions when he acts with reference to a proposed object; and, hence, must be thought as acting according to his self-determined *relative* consciousness.

It is clear to our thought, then, that love, which is the

divine nature, and is perfectly self-conscious as infinite egoism, expresses itself externally in restless, boundless activity; and this objective activity, with all its objects and conditions, is the universe.

*The endless process* of the universe is implied in its existence. All theories which suppose a cyclical return of the relative to the absolute, of the finite to the infinite, in the sense of suspension or of completed end of finite being as a whole, imply a limit or exhaustion of the infinite beyond which he cannot condition dependent being. Of course, such implied limitation is contradictory and absurd. But because no such exhaustion can be thought we must think of conditioned being, as a whole, as an endless development.

We positively affirm God's objective action, that is, we affirm the fact that God has acted in establishing objects external to himself, upon the ground of human consciousness alone. For aught we can *positively know*, all other world-phenomena may be part of his subjective action. In forming such a conception of the independent being as our thought requires we do not find anything which we can positively know to be external to God except ourself, whom we perceive as a conscious individual power. By inference from our own conscious unity we may and do conclude that all objects which manifest themselves after our manner, or order, in any degree—things, men, or animals—are, like ourselves, individual beings. Further, we think of the material world as being a part of God's objective action because we observe it as conditioned. Possibly there is in us an instinctive conviction that our perception of external objects is more real and valid than any existing philosophy of perception has definitely established. Certainly the last word has not been said on that subject. But in the knowledge of our own

definite unity and free action we have, firmly fixed, the fact of objective being, objective to God. This fact prevents our thought from finding rest in any form of pantheism.

How much of what we term the universe is God's objective action it is impossible for us to decide. Where the line should be drawn which distinguishes the divine ego from the universe it is not ours now to know; for the reason that we have direct perception of no other being but our individual self. It is true that by sense-perception we perceive the earth, the heavens, clouds, continents, and oceans; the seasons with their snows and verdure, their flowers, foliage, and fruits; the animals, great and small; the sounds and songs of nature; the human family with all its busy activities, its signs of joy, suffering, ambition, disappointment, achievement, and quenchless longing. But it is by inference we decide that these are real objects; and that inference is based upon our individual consciousness.

When I perceive objects which reveal to my experience and reason that they are self-determining, like myself, I am convinced they are persons. Upon such conviction we treat each other as free, responsible beings. Hence, the responsible qualities which distinguish persons maintain relationship through the whole family of man, and develop all forms of government and law. Though this reasoning is valid in all practical affairs, yet in deciding what may be directly known we must be guided by the facts of which we are directly conscious. Confined to these we can, at least, affirm our individual being, dependence, and free action—in a word, our individual personality.

This selfhood is the first fact which we directly know as objective, or external, to God. We know it as objective

to God because of our consciousness of perceiving, choosing, purposing, willing.

“Natural law” can be thought as only the *observed order* in which God acts. It can give us no insight as to where that action in the world passes from subject to object, or whether it is subjective or totally objective. Natural law is simply a recognition that there is about us an actor, not ourselves, who observes a regular order in his action, observes harmony everywhere. Relative order is relative truth; and love is the content which determines the form of relative truth. This form of truth, or order, is not imposed upon, nor accepted by, love; nor is it made in an arbitrary sense which implies it might have been made differently. But it is a conception which love determines as its formal expression. Let it be steadily borne in mind that the nature of perfect being is perfect action, and that perfect action is love; and that such a being, when acting with reference to an object, acts in the relation of subject to object; and, hence, the relations established by his objective action must be the *forms* of love’s objective expression. Relations are what they are, natural order is what it is, and relative truth is what it is because love is love.

*The harmony of relative being within itself*, and its harmony with the absolute being, has its ground in the initial harmony of absolute and relative consciousness in love, the nature of God. Harmony of relations implies the possible harmony of beings who exist in relation to each other. Relations are harmonious as they accord with the relative consciousness of God; and their absolute basis of harmony is in the compatibility of his relative with his absolute consciousness. This must be thought for the reason that love is the one determining action in God’s egoistic and altruistic determination.



Thus love appears as the nature of that ultimate unit in which alone thought can find the basis of an harmonious, and possibly successful, universe. It is that action in the universe which is self-sustaining and self-harmonizing in all forms, complexities, and extensions forever. It is this alone which can assure the philosopher's claim that "truth is a unit," or justify the saying, "There is in history a force, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," or inspire the poet to sing :

Truth crushed to earth shall rise again,—  
The eternal years of God are hers.

*Disharmony* may arise in conditioned being only at the point where dependent beings are free to originate action. Material things, which never break the harmony of natural order, must be referred to the action of God. All that we can affirm of them is that they must be thought by us as points or groups of points at which his action is perceptible to our senses. Hence, in all contact with the world and with our own nature, our conscious action must be thought as in interaction with him. Around and in us at every point are his conscious activities surrounding and filling us with ceaseless changes, yet transcending all change with immanent harmony. Our action must interact with him or react against him ; acting upon his action, and thus, as we purpose, perverting it or building into it. To the extent that our action intimately articulates with his we determine our progress and realize his concept, or ideal, of our being. Failure to so interact must be to antagonize our conditions, pervert our nature, and defeat his plan in us. Thus we are free in this conditioned self-determination.

Inferior beings may exist solely for the purpose of affording conditions to the development of superior classes of being, as vegetables afford conditions for the

development of animals, and certain classes of animals condition the development of others; and any or all of these, again, furnish conditions for the life and development of persons. All the vast scheme of sensitive nature may thus be concerned in conditioning the maturing splendors of the personal universe; and wholly, too, in accord with love, provided the degree of good realized by these inferior creatures compensates them for the suffering incident to their being. Our position that the universe is a product of love implies this compensation. Besides, there is nothing in our knowledge of the lower animals to show that they do not derive this compensation. But there is much to show that they do; which might here be adduced if it pertained to our line of inquiry. The "slaughter-house" argument of atheists, in which they dwell with so much sentiment upon the feeding of man upon animals, and animals upon each other, has no significance until this question of compensations is settled in their favor. That the lower animals suffer agonies in the process of their contributing to the life of others we do not question. But that the pleasures of their being far outweigh these agonies is not only altogether probable, as fact, but is a necessary inference from love's demands. And love's demands are affirmed upon higher and firmer grounds than any cosmic argument can offer. The main factors which dominate all the questions of being, as conditioned, are those two which establish it as a fact, namely, the nature of God, and the personal determination of finite beings.

XI. *Conditioning and determining* make up the whole of related action—the grand summary of "being, as conditioned." They are the two functions of all action in which the sovereignty of God and the personal freedom of dependent beings are conserved and harmonized. Fail-

ure to observe this discrimination has been at the bottom of the theological worry of centuries over the supposed inconsistency of the "sovereignty of God" and the "freedom of the human will." But bearing in mind that objective action is necessarily and always conditioned, and that the evolution of divine love is the conditioning process which underlies the development and self-determining of a finite, personal universe, there is no need to suppose that God must in any instance override the personal freedom of dependent beings in order to be thought "almighty," or able to achieve the evolution of love. Moreover, the divine altruism, seeking the highest perfection of dependent beings, must find its highest determination in conditioning the largest freedom possible to their dependent nature. Divine interference with their personal self-determination would be the defeat of altruism, and a confession of its failure to achieve a successful universe.

*The true scope of divine sovereignty and its glorious success are in affording conditions upon which the perfection of a personal universe shall be self-determined.* The affording these conditions is the evolution of divine love; a grander sweep of divine power than the compulsion or annihilation of a universe. The determination of their own destiny in the midst of these conditions is the sphere, the responsibility, and the glory of finite persons.

These determinations may, indeed, modify, distort, pervert the conditions which love provides; hence, its infinite altruistic freedom must afford further and ampler conditions upon which such perversions may be survived and corrected. Thus, while he posits conditions which finite persons may modify, God must find himself unfavorably conditioned in his effort to realize his altruistic purpose. But these unfavorable conditions but afford

occasion for surmounting them; not by overriding the personal freedom of finite persons, but by evolving further and wider conditions upon which they may remedy past abuses.

Such has been the history of our planet and race. Such is the only view, clear to thought, which accounts for the long continuance of mixed good and ill. Such is the suggestion of "the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God."

To sum up: From the two facts of being which we positively know, namely, being and dependence, we have been compelled to recognize:

1. An independent Force, perfectly self-determined; hence, an infinite Ego, a perfect Person.

2. That as Perfect Force, Perfect Action, conscious and infinitely free, he is the highest generalization, the Primary Unit, the unconditioned nature of independent being.

3. Perfect action is perfectly intentional.

4. The nature of perfect action is unconditioned self-love, realizing a perfect Ego; that is, actualizing the infinite ideal as the self-consciousness of the perfect Person.

5. Independent self-love, by realizing perfect egoism, founds perfect, that is, limitless, altruism; is capable of perfect *altruistic freedom*; hence, is capable of perpetual objective beneficence; hence, is free to condition the rise of an objective universe.

6. Self-love and love are objectively the same.

7. Love realizes all those characteristics and qualities which must be thought involved in independent action, namely: absolute truth, the supreme good, the holy, and intrinsic beauty.

8. Moral authority has its original ground in God's intentionally actualizing love's infinite ideal.

9. In infinite love there is not only altruistic freedom, but the altruistic spirit which must be thought as a self-conscious prompting, or yearning, in the infinite ego; a definitely self-determined force, or mode of consciousness, which prompts to the determination of altruistic being. And, since it is a prompting to the realization of an ideal, or perfect altruistic life, it discriminates and determines the holy intent of altruistic love; hence, he is a holy spirit.

10. The determination or actualization of altruism is the evolution of love, the realization of an objective personal universe.

11. Of an objective universe we cannot form a conception which we can surely know as objective except it be a personal universe, a universe of persons external or objective to God. Of these persons we must think they are self-determining, within conditions of dependence; which implies that the Creator forms a conception of their being and forms the conditions of its rise, leaving the actualization of such conception to the self-determination of these conditioned beings themselves.

12. This conception in the divine mind implies the differentiation or dividing of thought and thing, of ideal and its realization, and establishing their relations to each other; hence, it evinces consciousness in God of conditions and relations, a *relative consciousness*, the initial of successive being, the formal, the logical discrimination of being—"the Word," "the Begotten of the Father."

13. God's determination of relative consciousness in himself appears in his freedom to form a relative conception, and thus consciously differentiate thought and thing.

14. In the order of God's relative consciousness is the going forth of his objective activities; all evolution.

Hence, "the Creator" is God acting according to his conception of rational relations; hence, his logical, formal, or "begotten" consciousness, "the Son."

15. Conditioning and determining make up the whole of related action—the grand summary of "being, as conditioned." The process of love's evolution establishes the conditions upon which dependent beings spontaneously and gradually enact self-determination and consequent personal identity, as dependent, or conditioned, persons. The entire universe is conditioned by love, although the relationship of many classes of beings may be but to condition the determination of other classes.

16. Dependent persons are beings who are consciously free in their intentions and in the use which they make of their conditions; hence, within their conditions, are self-determining.

17. Capable of intentional self-determination, they are able to determine themselves as either in harmony or disharmony with their conditions, able to use or abuse them, and thus realize the intention of divine altruism or pervert its auspices.

18. Freedom of intention, in human beings, is conditioned by a sense of moral authority, termed conscience, or the "moral law," or "moral imperative," which, though it may be neglected, cannot be corrupted as can other conditions. It is an independent and authoritative sentiment which imposes the obligation of moral purity upon human intentions wherein those intentions pertain to self-determinations, and imposes altruistic righteousness and benevolence wherein our intentions relate to other beings. It is independent in that it cannot be corrupted or perverted. It is authoritative in that it imposes the authority of the ideal upon the actual. It is wholly moral in that its prompting, though insistent, is never compulsory. It

is altruistic in that it urges justice and benevolence toward others. It is practical in that personal innocence, if obeyed, guilt if disobeyed, result from its moral behest. It is holy in that it prompts to perfect intention. It is at one with the altruistic spirit in God in that it prompts to holiness, justice, and benevolence of intention in all self-determining and objective action. It is identical with the "Holy Spirit" in that harmony with its prompting implies the determination of perfect altruism, the perfection of the personal universe.

19. Thus the independent, altruistic spirit which prompts to practical altruism in a perfect universe maintains the conditions to harmony of intention, leading to harmonious self-determination in all persons by disclosing the divine intent of their being.

20. The universe is a system of conditioning and determining action—action of the Creator and dependent beings in relation to each other, objectively conditioning each other—dependent persons subjectively determining themselves upon these conditions. Conditioning and determining construct objective being; and hence make up the warp and woof of human life, history, and destiny.

21. The interaction of the Creator with dependent beings, and their interaction with him and each other, constitute what we have termed "being, as conditioned."

22. Free self-determining being, or personality, personally external to God, yet interacting with his action in nature and environment, affords a full account of all the facts of human consciousness and experience.

23. The grand fact revealed to thought in these "implications of being" is *the evolution of love*. The grand significance of man is his position as an exponent and beneficiary of that evolution.

With this view of *being* we proceed to Part Second.

**PART SECOND**  
**IMPLICATIONS OF LOVE**



There is a love unstained by selfishness,  
Th' outpouring tide of self-abandonment,  
That loves to love; and deems its preciousness  
Repaid in loving, though no sentiment  
Of love returned reward its sacrament;  
Nor stays to question what the loved one will,  
But hymns its overture, with blessings immanent;  
Rapt and sublimed by love's exalting thrill,  
Loves on, through frown or smile, divine, immortal  
still.

## CHAPTER I

### CREATION

The ideal, stable type of ever-moving progress.—*Victor Hugo.*

IN outlining the "implications of being" we have proceeded from the perceived facts, being and dependence, to the recognition of love as the nature of that perfect action which is the independent ego. In this perfect ego we have found perfect altruistic freedom to objective activity. Hence, we have clear scope in which to trace the "implications of love" in its evolution. Such evolution brings us to consider the natural world as a creation, and God, in the capacity of his conditioned consciousness, as Creator.

That our thoughts at this point may be entirely clear to the reader we use the term "creation" in order that we may not seem to entertain the idea that the Creator wrought the universe from assumed preëxisting matter. Nor do we take upon us to affirm anything of matter, substance, or reality further than to say it is force, or action, and what action unavoidably implies. Without possibility of doubt or gainsaying, action is real. This we can and must affirm. Hence, we affirm of substance that it is, at least, action—whether it is the action which merely exists or that which moves, is conscious, thinks, wills, feels. And all we affirm, or can affirm, of the nature of matter is that there are points and groups of points, greater or less, at which action, or force, is perceptible through our senses.

The fact that we perceive persistence and a certain regularity, or fixed order, in these manifestations of force,

or action, leads us to regard them as being permanent. This permanent order of persistent action we term "nature," or the natural world. True, we may suppose or imagine or even assume many things of the substance, properties, and phenomena of nature, but there is one thing which we can and must affirm as positive fact, and that thing is *action*. The term "creation," therefore, can certainly signify to our thought nothing more or less than those divine activities which consist as a system of conditions upon which spontaneous and self-determining actions—that is, objective beings—may and do arise. And because these divine activities are put forth with reference to, and for the purpose of, conditioning the spontaneous rise of self-determining beings, they are termed the objective action of God.

These classes of beings which arise spontaneously upon the conditions which the Creator thus posits and maintains constitute dependent being. They must be thought as objective to God in so far as they are without consciousness of God. If they are consciously self-determining, as is man, they are consciously other than God. Although this self-determining action arises in a nature which consists of the Creator's action, it is not conscious of that nature further than it is conscious of using it. By its conscious use of that nature it appropriates and incorporates it into the self-consciousness of its own being. The self-determination of a being who is thus free to use, select, modify, develop, repress, or pervert the elements of his nature is what constitutes dependent personality, or a finite person.

A definite conception of creation, or the natural world, may be stated thus:

1. Creation is a system of conditioned divine activities which constitute conditions upon which dependent beings

may arise and may determine their perfection, and so determine a perfect universe.

2. If the perfect universe is developed in essential harmony—that is, harmony of purpose, or intent—with the conditions posited in creation—notwithstanding the rise of errors and accidents—it is a natural universe, naturally developed.

3. If essential, intentional disharmony arise, modifying natural conditions, the world becomes thereby *preternatural*, that is, “aside from natural.”

4. If thereupon divine love evolve further or other conditions upon which the perfect universe may be achieved—notwithstanding the existence of essential disharmony—this evolution is *supernatural*.

5. The line between the conditions posited in creation and those which may be added for recovery from essential disharmony is the line which distinguishes the natural from the supernatural. Correction of errors and irregularities must be thought attainable upon natural conditions, but intentional, self-determined antagonism to love and its purpose in nature, perverting natural conditions to malign ends, is essential disharmony, unnatural, preternatural, and may require extranatural, or supernatural, conditions to compass its correction or elimination.

With the above view of the objective action of God, we may properly term the natural world a creation. Whether or not the *method* of creation is that of “evolution” as held or opposed by physical scientists, does not concern us here. For whether the method of God’s objective action may have occupied millions of centuries, extended through numberless stages of nebulæ, organism, and life, building conditions upon which new forms of life arise to condition the rise of still succeeding forms before conscious self-determination breaks forth in a per-

sonal universe; or whether he directly posits the conditions upon which races of finite persons arise and determine their development; or whether he created dependent persons in a full-orbed finite perfection which they have degraded, cannot influence this question, *the evolution of the nature of a self-existent reality*. In any case these objective activities are but the goings forth of love's evolution devoted to the realization of an ideal universe, of which materialistic evolution upon any theory can be but a fragmentary part.

But to return to the above statement of our conception of creation, its first item is of chief importance in this chapter: Creation is a system of conditioned divine activities which constitute conditions upon which dependent beings may arise and may determine their perfection, and so determine a perfect universe.

This statement affirms that God conditions, and finite persons determine, the universe. It implies also that the creation is perfect in that it affords the conditions upon which finite persons may determine their own perfection, and a perfect universe. Hence, the fact and form of the natural world must be conditioned by the nature of the Creator and the dependent freedom of the creature. We will, therefore, consider:

I. Love, as the nature of the *conditioning* action and purpose of creation.

II. Dependent freedom, as the nature of the *determining* factor of the world.

I. Under the first of these grand conditions we note that creation is *chosen* action, a step or movement in the evolution of love. The world is not a preëxisting thing, but is the dependent, objective product of creative will.

Nor is it a necessary step in God's self-determination. Such a view cannot discriminate his unconditioned being.

but must imply that the original agent, God, is dependent upon the universe as a means to his own self-conscious perfection. "Unconditioned being" is essential to any rational view of being; and the only view consistent with the unconditioned being of God and the fact of conditioned finite being is that the latter is the *chosen* product of God's objective effort. He is absolutely independent, the universe is dependent upon him. Having found, too, that the nature of the unconditioned, infinite, or independent being is love, we have been able to see that such nature is unconditioned in itself; and that there is in it infinite freedom to act objectively or not, as he may choose, without implying augmentation, impairment, limitation, or abrogation of his infinite egoistic consciousness. Therefore we view creation as simply the evidence that He who is infinitely self-sufficient chooses, in his perfect altruistic freedom, to put forth objective and eternal activities in establishing and maintaining finite being.

*This choice implies intention.* Contemplated as an object of our thought, creation is a matter of choice with the Creator, which implies an intention which accounts for the existence of the universe. The evolution of love is the method by which the divine intention is disclosed and carried out. The fact that it is an evolution does not preclude the fact that it has a motive for its disclosures. We distinctly admit that this intention may comprehend much more than we can discern. Yet even we can recognize in love that which amply accounts for the creation of a system of dependent being. We are, indeed, compelled to recognize in love a motive to such a project.

In a former chapter we have seen that infinite being must be thought as having the spirit, or prompting tendency, to realize all possible being which may subsist with itself. And since in its realization of independent egoism

there are the absolute freedom and prompting to altruistic action we must recognize the altruistic spirit of infinite love. We must recognize the perfect freedom, potency, and disposition of a love-perfected egoism to realize eternal and limitless altruism.

Since his nature is devotion to the realization of ideal being he must be thought conscious of a conception of a perfect (conditioned) universe, an ideal from which may be explicated an indefinitely extended relationship, and which can be actualized only by objective beings. Hence he must be thought to possess an altruistic spirit which seeks the realization of every relational perfection, the actualization of all forms of truth, the determination of all benevolence. We cannot think of infinite egoistic love without including in the thought this eternal spirit of boundless altruism; the spirit which seeks the realization of all ideals of being, every type of perfection, developing every line of beneficent relationship. It is the spirit of objective perfection.

Since, as we have seen, intending the perfect is holiness, this altruistic spirit of love which determines itself as prompting to the realization of every perfection must be recognized by us as identical with what the sacred Scriptures term the "Holy Spirit," or "Spirit of Holiness"—not the formal, or relational, action of God, creating finite things, but the concrete sentiment of infinite love; ever realized in the unconditioned perfection of God, and ever prompting the realization of all conditioned ideals.

If it is asked why or how there is in perfect being this spirit which prompts to a divine life of objective perfection we must answer, we cannot tell. Which is the same as to say, we cannot tell "how being is made," or how God is as he is. Why or how there is in his perfect action

the spirit, or active tendency, to realize finite or conditioned ideals we do not attempt to answer further than to say that love is devotion to the realization of perfect being, and is benevolent; and that is the same as to say that perfect egoism has not only the capability, but the spirit, of perfect altruism.

We might say in a concrete, popular way that a being whose nature is love naturally desires objects to love—objects who can know and prize and reciprocate his love; hence he creates a world of persons. This statement is correct enough, provided we understand by the phrase, “naturally desires,” that God, who knows the good, the value of love-determined being, and the ability of his love to successfully condition a universe of such beings, does naturally, in the spirit of benevolence, desire to bestow this good upon others by creating them.

What love is in kind or quality, as *subjective intention*, it must be as *objective purpose*. The practical goodness of *love-involved* being is the practical quality of *love-evolved* being, and hence is implied in love’s creative purpose. Since the purpose thus implied in love is the practical realization of the perfect, it is the implied purpose in the creation of all being. The purpose of creation is the realization of a perfect universe, and thus, benevolently, the bestowal of the highest good of being.

A being whose nature is love cannot be thought as giving existence to other beings in an aimless, accidental, or blind experimentation. The Creator, conscious of love’s resource, is conscious that the ideal universe which is comprehended in love’s altruistic intention can be realized by an evolution of love. The evolution of love in creation, therefore, is not to be thought as a purposeless demonstration of force, but as love’s method of realizing its objective ideal. Hence the evolution of love is teleo-



logical; it is projected with a definite end in view. That end must be the realization of a perfect universe.

It is in love that we find creation must have an *adequate* purpose which fully justifies the choice to create dependent beings. Nothing can have been created which is not implied in the grand intention of love. Since love only, because of its infinite altruistic freedom, can afford the conditions to a creation, love alone is able to assure an adequate result in creation. Any creation, therefore, which is possible to thought must be prompted and projected as an objective determination of love. All created beings and all phenomena must be thought as in pursuance of such determination. We cannot evade the implication that the motive of love's evolution is not a capricious demonstration of force, but the creation of beings that they may realize a great purpose. This purpose is implied and conditioned in love. It is the benevolent spirit of love choosing objective determination.

The highest good possible to conditioned being, as God knows and prizes it, must be included in the purpose of his giving being to others. We affirm that the "highest good" is the object of creation, on the ground, only, that love is the nature of God and of his creative action; and that the greatest good must be the practical value of perfect action, and that any action must be a good in proportion as that action approximates perfection. More explicitly: God's purpose in creation is to realize the finite, or objective, ideal, "the truth." He, as the Son, is conscious of it in thought; the universe must determine it as thing. It is the realization, or actualization, of the ideal of finite, relational being. This intended perfection in creation is holy, its practical realization is the highest finite good; and this is affirmed on the ground that love, as action which seeks the realization of the ideal, the

achievement of the perfect in being, is both perfectly holy and perfectly benevolent. Hence the purpose is the realization of ideal, or perfect finite, being; and the benevolent quality of love implies that this purpose is a bestowal upon created persons of the highest conditioned good. Therefore, the purpose in projecting finite being is to actualize the finite ideal, achieve the highest objective exercise of love, the satisfaction of which is the realization of the greatest finite good.

*What is the chief good?* To this question of the ages our answer must be: The practical satisfaction of love is the supreme good; or, self-determining action which realizes the highest qualities of being. But what are the highest qualities of being? Unquestionably those qualities which are founded and perfectly realized in the unconditioned nature of God, and may be realized in kind by conditioned persons. This is the same as to say that the highest mode of life, perfectly adjusted life, conditioned or unconditioned, actualizes the supreme good. And since love is the nature of perfect action, which determines the highest qualities of being, love is the highest mode of life, and its self-satisfaction is the supreme good. It can be satisfied with nothing, however pleasurable, but the determination of the highest qualities of one's being.

The pleasure, however great, which results from degrading action, or is not incident to exaltation or excellence of being, is not a good and cannot satisfy love's spirit of self-determination. Thus, the kind of action which determines the perfection of its own qualities in God, the unconditioned being, or achieves it by process in conditioned beings, must be thought the highest good. While we may have the utmost faith that love will afford the largest and most enduring pleasure, as incident to

its action, processes, and qualities, we are quite sure that pain is often incident to the best achievement of its conditioned activities. Hence, when we speak of the highest good of finite being, we do not imply that good is to be measured by the degree of pleasure which thereto may be incident.

The good, then, is the practical quality of perfect action or being; the practical quality of God. Harmony with God is a matter of quality, and to be conscious of harmony with the perfect being is, in kind, or quality, the consciousness of the highest mode of dependent personality. This is consciousness of the supreme good, in kind. Its degree is modified by conditions. It is love's perfect, though conditioned, action.

A mother who toils and watches that her children may have health and comfort scarce takes a second thought as to whether they will ever repay her, or be able, indeed, to contribute anything to her comfort. It is not the thought of remuneration which prompts her toil, solicitude, and undying interest for them; it is love. Love is her supreme, motherly good—all the more tender and precious if the loved ones are helpless to repay her.

There is a love unstained by selfishness,  
Th' outpouring tide of self-abandonment,  
*That loves to love*; and deems its preciousness  
Repaid in loving.

Good is a quality of love—not a quantitative result which is sought as an object, or end, to which love is a means.

This is the dividing line, or differentiating point, between faith and utilitarianism. Faith recognizes that the *perfection of being* is the supreme good; and from this position subjects the actual self, which one is, to the ideal self which he would become. Thus in a finite person's

life faith affords conditions to his action, love, which seeks to realize perfection of quality. Utilitarianism seeks quantitative satisfaction for the actual self, and counts that the good. Faith seeks love, and accounts its qualities and powers as the supreme good. Utilitarianism, as a mode of life, is systematic selfishness, but faith affords the conditions to pure self-love, which is unselfish devotement to the best possible life.

Men speak of "acting on principle," and "doing right because it is right." That is to say, by doing right they enact the truth, and truth is of the infinite ideal. This is devotion to the ideal, in the faith that the infinite ideal is actualized in God, and is, therefore, the supreme criterion of right quality, righteousness. What is termed "policy," as opposed to "principle," makes present actual self the criterion of good, and implies that in the degree the demands of this self are met is good attained. This ignores the authority of the ideal as criterion of conduct; and ignores that the good is found in realizing an ideal life. Faith holds that love to God as the perfect, and love to fellow beings with a view to their perfecting, is the highest mode of life. Utilitarianism makes the quantitative satisfaction of one's actual self the highest mode of life, and gratitude for received benefits the highest mode of finite love. With the former, righteousness is the actualizing of truth. With the latter, righteousness is the promoting of comfort, pleasure. The God of faith is an actual perfection to be loved, communed with, and copied as the absolute, exemplar, and inspirer of personal perfection. The God of utilitarianism is but a convenience. With the one quantitative possession is but a means by which to achieve higher quality of being. With the other, quality of being is desirable only to accumulate greater quantitative satisfaction. It is the

old question, as between Abel and Cain, Stoic and Epicurean, the Sermon on the Mount and Jewish greed, and as between those who still think the universe exists for the perfection of finite being and those who hold that its object is pleasurable satisfaction.

Of course, the evolution of love sustains the faith-view. Since love seeks to realize the perfect, it follows that the perfection of finite being is the grand object to be accomplished. Hence, the highest mode of life, the highest determination of character, is realized by devotion to the true, the perfect; indifferent as to whether greater good could be otherwise attained. "For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." The qualitative perfection of the universe must be attained before the degree of good possible to finite beings can be intelligently estimated, or the attainment of it be free from all embarrassments.

Nothing, it seems, can be clearer than that living, not possessing, is the true excellence; and that right living, living in interaction, communion, companionship with the perfect, must be the supreme good. Nor can any affirmation be more confidently made than that utilitarianism is, after all, nothing but readjusted selfishness.

The universe must attain perfection in kind before it can be free from disadvantage in determining the degree of its good. When perfect harmony and perfect security are achieved, then the largest freedom for good will begin to be realized.

These affirmations are made, of course, upon the ground that the good, beneficence, is but a practical quality in love which is the perfect mode of being; and benevolence, the bestowal of good, is its incidental outcome. It cannot be thought that any addition to his own nature or good is sought by the Infinite One in the crea-

tion. The independent cannot be thought to depend, in any sense, upon anything, especially not upon dependent action or being. Hence, we affirm that the creation is purely a bestowal of being upon those created; and since love is the nature of the Creator, and his objective action is an evolution of love, it must follow that his bestowal of being is purely benevolent.

The perfect altruistic freedom, the infinite unselfishness, must find in this purpose ample incentive to create and sustain other beings to share its good. Dependent being, which is a positive good—which is, upon the whole, better than nonexistence—is such being as love can benevolently authorize. Since love is action which is devoted to the realization of the ideal, an ideal system of dependent being must be thought a worthy object of such devotion. If God can conceive a system of dependent being which may not, upon the whole, impose wrong upon any portion or person in it, but place it within the power and conditions of each being therein to make his existence a positive good, then benevolence would prompt to the creation of such a system. Or if, in his absolute knowledge of love, God sees that it is a kind of action which can develop such a system of good, then benevolent reason appears why love which attains infinite egoistic good should also be devoted to attaining the highest altruistic good. It seems impossible to see that love would purpose otherwise. Not for his perfect good, but for his glory, the *manifestation* of his perfection and endless resource of goodness for others, he creates all things.

It comes to this: The bestowal of perfect finite being and all it may achieve is the purpose, to which infinite love is the motive, in creation. Here that supreme devotion to perfect being which appears in God as infinite self-love sweeps out into the objective process of main-

taining the perfect conditioned being of finite creatures, and illustrates objectively the infinite and inseparable holiness and benevolence of perfect egoism. Love, the perfect action which realizes the infinite in God, seeks to achieve the perfect finite. Inasmuch as nonexistence has no possibilities and is worthless, and in being, only, is the possibility of good, the founder of finite being founds it for all its possible good. Love does this in founding beings which may actualize an ideal in their individual being, and an ideal universe as a whole.

It is because his nature is love that the independent One is the all-supporting author of dependent being. This is to say, that the infinite person has, in his perfect action, love, a perfect egoistic life and chooses also a perfect altruistic life. One has the consciousness of unconditioned perfection, the other is the objective, or altruistic, in which he has the consciousness of conditioning perfection in others. His perfect egoism has the spirit and potency of perfect altruism, realizes infinite, unconditioned being in himself, and determines the fact and form of the dependent universe. Perfect in himself, he is perfect for all others.

When we speak of perfect objective action or being it is to be understood that perfect *conditioned* action or being is meant. It is in this sense that we affirm creation must be perfect.

*Love's creative action must project the highest ideal of conditioned being—a perfect universe.* It must contemplate, and afford conditions for, the production of the highest conditioned good. Devotement to ideal perfection is, in creation, devotement to ideal *conditioned* perfection. What love is, in kind, in its infinite self-determination, must be its character in its finite determination. Since it is perfect action, it must be thought perfect in its

objective activities, with no exception save as limited by the conditions which are implied in its relation to its object. It must be thought to project none other than a perfect conditioned universe, the maximum excellence of conditioned being. This is to say that love is not only supreme devotement to egoistic perfection, but is, in the Creator, supreme devotement to the realization of altruistic perfection. Without impairing or perverting itself, but in direct accord with its own ineffaceable perfectness, it creates and sustains a ceaseless universe of dependent being. It abides in the consciousness of unconditioned perfection while determining its self-consciousness of perfect conditioned being; abides in the consciousness of absolute reality while consciously real in all its objective relations; abides in the practical experience of infinite good, and also bestows the highest finite good. Perfect action in itself, it is perfect as it relates itself to objects. God's objective action, then, must be regarded as the conditioned goings-forth of love in relation to objects.

Creative love only creates the *conditions* to perfection. Being the nature of the force which expresses itself in the creation of dependent beings, it is the content which determines the forms of creation. These forms and their relations to the Creator, toward each other, and within themselves are results founded by love. Hence, love's holiness, or perfectness of intention, must have in it the highest ideal of dependent being; and its objective action aims to realize that ideal. The creation, then, must be the highest type of conditioned action, realizing the highest conditioned good as a whole. The Creator must be thought able to say of his work, "Behold, it is very good."

Since, as seen in Chapter III, Part First, conditioning and determining comprehend the whole of conditioned being, it is clear the creation is a system of activities which



only establishes conditions for the rise and development of finite beings. And since we have seen that creative action is conditioned, it is both conditioned and conditioning. It seeks to realize the highest attainable form of finite being; but as such "highest form" must include persons who, though *conditioned*, are self-determining within their conditions, it is plain that creative action is confined to establishing conditions, simply. It establishes conditions upon which finite beings may themselves determine their perfection, and experience their highest conditioned good. And since the whole universe in its entire history is interrelated it must be viewed as a whole which imposes conditions upon each of its members; and the whole term of his career and scope of his relationship must be considered when we estimate the excellence or perfection of any finite being. Hence, it is the highest of dependent being, as a whole, and the perfecting of each being as conditioned by the perfecting of the whole, which we affirm when we say that creation is perfect conditioning action, at all times and places affording to all beings the best conditions to their perfection which God's perfect objective action can posit.

Since created beings must be conditioned beings, and also must condition each other and be conditioned by each other, lower orders constituting conditions to the higher, love's choice is to create them of such type and upon such conditions as will afford the highest good, upon the whole, to each and all. Such is the perfect creation; and love, seeking the perfect, seeks the highest conditioned good possible to each and all, and at all times. The highest type of perfection for the universe, as a whole, and forever, must condition the type and the good of individuals and the universe at the various stages of their development. Hence the degree of excellence, how-

ever great or small at any moment, is conditioned by all the influences which are concerned in realizing the highest good upon the whole. Whatever influences there may be which hinder, retard, or accelerate the actualization of the ideal universe, they are parts of the conditions upon which the perfection of finite being is to be realized. These conditions may, severally, be more or less influential at one time than at another, and by so much will influence the degree of good realized at such time. But the fact remains, as an implication of love, that the degree of good realized by finite beings at any particular stage of their being is the highest possible to them at that stage, considering the determining forces and the conditions which, as a whole, can produce a perfect universe.

An evolving force which is holy and good would provide that the beings who are creatures of its evolution should be conditioned at all times and at all points for their greatest possible good. But "their greatest possible good" means the greatest good possible to all and through the entire term of their existence; hence, this greatest sum of good must condition the degree of good possible to each person at any given time or place. All comes to this: *A Creator whose nature is love will secure the greatest good, upon the whole, to which his creatures, as a whole, may be made receptive.*

Since the objective action of God must be thought as always seeking to realize his ideal, the Creator must be regarded as actualizing an ideal world so far forth as the world is solely his action. This implies that the creative action is not only perfect as conditioned action, but is perfect conditioning action also. This, however, does not imply that the universe is perfect.

*The creation is perfect, but the universe is not.* A perfect universe must, at least, be one in which every depend-

ent being who has any degree of self-determination acts in harmony with the conditions of his being, perfectly interacts with the Creator's action; one in which beings of conditioned freedom act in harmony with conditions assigned them by the Creator. The action which founds them and their natural conditions constitutes the creation, but their self-determined selves, and their assigned conditions as used or abused by them, constitute the universe. The Creator's action affords the conditions in finite beings upon which their intentions arise, and upon which their action proceeds in all respects. If their action is in accordance with the intention implied in those conditions they may be said to articulate, or act in harmony with the creative action; that is, in harmony with their nature. They may choose to articulate with that creative action, or they may neglect or abuse it, and so pervert it. The Creator's action is "very good"; but if neglected, abused, perverted by the action of dependent beings, it must fall very far short of being good. The perfection of the universe is in the perfect interaction or articulation of the creature with the Creator; but the perfection of creation is in the *possibility* of such interaction.

The possibility of such interaction of dependent with independent being, then, must be the perfect creation. Such perfect creation does not exclude the possibility of disharmony, nor does an inharmonious universe argue an imperfect creation. A creation that is proof against disharmony is but a machine, and can never develop into a realization of an ideal universe. The perfection of the creation is that it has the possibilities, affords the conditions, of a perfect objective universe; and these possibilities are they which render it liable to disharmonies.

*The possibility of perfectly harmonious interaction of dependent with independent being is the possibility of*

*universal harmony.* Love's perfect action is the basis of implied harmony between the independent subject and the dependent objects, who by reason of their self-determining power within finite limits may, as subjects or actors, harmonize with the Creator and with each other. Thus, as divine love is the basis of universal harmony, the loving reciprocation of divine love by finite persons is the harmonizing action which is to determine a perfect universe. But as dependent persons are free to reciprocate the creative love, or not, they may determine their own action and development, determine themselves, so as to produce defect and disharmony within the bosom of a perfect creation.

*What types* of dependent being shall be created are implied in love. Love's ideal is the law which decides what these types may be. Thus, love implies that no beings will exist except such as may actualize an ideal which implies their highest good. Whatever may be their type it must realize good to them in the degree the type is practically attained. The full actualization of the ideal of any type of being must yield the highest good possible to such being. Actualizing their ideal according to their type is the method of attaining their chief good. Whatever may be the form of devotement by which each actualizes his ideal, that is his form or mode of love. It thus appears that love is the perfect, or supreme, determining action in all conscious beings. It is, in all, the action which realizes their ideal.

Without such perfect action within their conditions they do not actualize their ideal selves; hence, cannot achieve their highest good, but must incur condemnation from their ideal. The discrepancy between the ideal self and actual self is the measure of their condemnation. Discrepancy between the ideal self and the actual self, of

which persons are conscious, is consciousness of failure, misfortune, or guilt, or all combined. The perfection of the individual, like the perfection of the universe, depends upon realizing that ideal which love's creative action prescribes in his type. In the measure this perfection is approximated is the good of each achieved.

It is vain to speculate whether the creation, as we perceive it, is a perfect creation. The limitedness of our perception of it, or of the entire career of even one finite being, prevents our forming a judgment from the world-point of view. We hold all optimism and pessimism, based upon an attempted balance sheet of the world's good and ill, as most shallow and vain wrangling. Only from ontological implication can a judgment be rationally ventured; and that judgment must rest upon the nature of absolute reality. And since action is reality, and the nature of the absolute, perfect action is love, and the creation is an evolution of love, the creation must be an evolution of real beneficence. It must be, upon the whole, benevolent and beneficent—perfect in the determination of an order or form of dependent being.

Whether that perfect form of dependent being must be thought as created full-orbed or progressively developed through a series of stages will be considered later. Let it suffice to recognize here that a conditioning power whose nature is love, and therefore true and good, holy and benevolent, must ultimately achieve such perfect world—a world not *ultimately* true and good, but *always* true and good; always of the highest beneficence within the conditions imposed by the essential factors of a perfect universe, namely, divine love, which cannot rest short of realizing the ideal of all finite being, and the self-determining freedom of dependent persons.

Perfect altruism implies that every type of being which

may be founded in holiness and benevolence may, perhaps must, arise at some stage in the creative process; and that none other can arise than such as may be made a participant in the harmonies of perfect finite beneficence. If disharmonies arise, disturbing the right relations of created beings, it is because some or all of these beings are able to determine themselves otherwise than as purposed by divine love. Yet these disharmonies are within the all-conditioning embrace of love's limitless altruism, and will be rendered either self-correcting or self-eliminating.

What are termed "physical disturbances" and "animal antagonisms" may or may not be real disharmonies in the world-order. Like the questions of optimism and pessimism, they are indeterminable by us, because of the lack of full data. Inasmuch as the lowest forms of conscious being may have, and for aught we can know do have, an instinctively sought perfection, in attaining which the interest, the joy, of being is realized; inasmuch as the lowest type of person has his ideal to actualize, his chief good to attain, his sacred to adore, his beautiful to enjoy, this love-projected type of being must be thought intrinsically good. All other things are good only as related to being. Nonbeing is nothing, has neither quality nor worth. Evil or undesirable being is abused, debased being. Being may have its pangs, its woes, but, conditioned in love, they are incident to attaining higher excellence. Nonbeing is without a pang, but it is without a thrill of joy or glory. The self-determining agent of lowest type finds a charm in his being which makes him strong to endure all hardships so long as his self-determination is not degrading, but upward, toward self-perfection. It is only when self-determination sinks toward its entire loss in complete dependence that the charm of

being can be lost, or existence cease to be a good. Hence, we say that in being, only, are the possibilities of good; and all forms of being must be objects of interest with that divine spirit which we have termed "supreme devotion to the determination of being"—perfect being in the independent, perfect conditioned being in the dependently self-determining, instinctive being in the instinctively determined.

A study of cosmic phenomena may, indeed, develop a probability that the Creator is benevolent and his action harmonious, but it cannot decide these questions. Subjective religious experience may deepen this probability into a profound conviction, but this amounts to nothing more, as evidence, than to corroborate what has been primarily implied in the divine nature. This corroboration, it is true, may amount to a spiritual demonstration, but a demonstration wrought upon a previous acceptance, by faith, of the point in question, the benevolence of God. The more we learn of his cosmic activities, and the more accurately we articulate with them, the more successful are our industries, the more nearly perfect our arts, the more accurate our sciences, the sounder our finances, the more progressive our civilization, the better our health, and the more symmetrical and strong our characters. This is, however, the full height of the cosmic argument for the benevolence of the Creator. It argues that if all dependent persons were perfectly self-adjusted to the Creator's action there is the highest probability that their greatest good would be attained. But it is only in the fact that love is the nature of the coördinating action of the universe that we have *independent assurance* that the creation is perfect. The holiness of love assures that God's intention, in his objective action, cannot fall below his ideal of a universe. This implication is as clear as

that the self-determined nature of God cannot fall below infinite perfection without being conditioned and condemned by his infinite conception, or ideal. A perfect God implies a perfect Creator; neither can be realized except in the unconditioned and all-conditioning perfect action, love. The moral authority of love's perfect action must condemn any form of creation which falls below the possible realization of an ideal universe. The perfect action of love implies a perfect conception and a complete achievement of dependent perfection.

*The ideal universe*, God's ideal, his conception of perfect finite being, must be quite beyond all that human imagination can picture. No attempt to describe it can be tolerated. Yet concerning it there are certain implications which reason must affirm. Since love is devoted to realizing the perfect, it is a perfect universe, *only*, which its evolution can have in view. This action, though conditioned, is perfect within its conditions. God's action, which is the going-forth of love only by virtue of its devotion to the perfect, cannot be self-conscious love if it seek less than to realize the ideal. Not only does love realize the absolute perfect in the independent being, and the relative ideal in the "Eternal Son," the Creator, but, having chosen to create a universe, love must be thought devoted to the realization of an ideal universe.

Moreover, an ideal universe when actually realized is a perfect universe; a perfect universe realizes the highest conditioned good; and divine love acting objectively, though within limited conditions, cannot imply less than this highest conditioned good.

However perfect the universe may be or become, it must, nevertheless, be conditioned by the relations of subject and object and dependence. But since love is the *nature* of that action which creates and carries on the



universe, love must be recognized as the all-comprehending condition which assures a universe which shall be a perfect realization of the ideal finite being, the object of a perfect determination of divine altruism.

On this account, the ideal universe must be the primary or dominating condition to the creation and carrying on of the actual universe, the natural world. All that is created and all that is developed on the part of nature has reference to the ideal universe, and must be estimated according to that criterion. Whatever may be the degree of good or ill actually experienced in the universe, the implication of love is that it is the highest good of which existing conditions will admit; and existing conditions at any given time are imposed by their relation to the actualizing of love's ideal universe. At each point in the history of the universe the highest good is realized which *can* be, upon the conditions which ultimately afford a perfect universe. *Hence, the creation is both perfect and good because it affords the natural conditions upon which the ideal universe may be realized.*

All this implies that the ideal universe which love seeks in its evolution very far transcends any which power can create outright. If creation, as evolved by love, is not the full-orbed, unalloyed good of perfect finite being it is owing, not to a defect, but an excellence, in creation. This excellence is in the fact that creation affords, not a perfect mechanism, but a stable basis from which divine love perpetually evolves conditions upon which finite persons may determine ever-progressing companionship with each other and with the Infinite Person—love's ideal universe.

The perfection of dependent personality cannot be created; hence, a perfect universe cannot be created. Personality consists in self-determination; dependent per-

sonality consists in dependent, or conditioned, self-determination. Hence, dependent persons must determine their own conditioned perfection. To suppose the creation of perfect dependent persons would be to suppose that one person could determine what is self-determined in another; that is, to suppose a contradiction. Hence, it is impossible to thought; persons are persons by virtue of determining their own characters, perfect or otherwise. This they may do, dependent upon the conditions the Creator affords. Perfect creation, therefore, is simply the affording perfect conditions upon which dependent persons may determine their perfect being, and thereby determine a perfect universe.

II. Dependent freedom, or dependent self-determination, as the nature of the *determining* factor of the world, is now to be considered. Being one of the factors which determine the universe, that factor, as well as creative action, must be recognized as essential to the perfecting process. These two main factors comprehend and express all the conditions incident to the project of a universe; and since love is the nature of the divine action which affords the original conditions of finite being, we are assured that these original conditions are afforded for the purpose of achieving a universe of perfected persons. These two factors coöperating, the ideal universe will be realized.

The perfectness of the natural world, created with reference to love's ideal world, has its chief exponent in the free self-determination of finite persons. While this is an excellence without which there could be no objective universe, it may, of course, menace the order and harmony of the world, and baffle for ages the realization of the ideal universe. Inasmuch as each person is free to choose what his action shall be, in all those respects in

which he determines himself, it is plain that the perfecting of the universe must depend upon the will of each finite person as well as upon the will of the Creator. Accepting the Creator's action as the coördinating ground, with and upon which all his creatures may harmoniously interact, it remains for dependent persons to determine the perfection of the universe by determining themselves in harmony with him. But since dependent persons may, or may not, harmonize with the conditions which creative love posits as the coördinating ground of their action, it is clear that the most which creation can do toward achieving a perfect universe is to establish the most favorable conditions upon which the harmonious action of dependent persons may be secured. Hence, love implies that their nature and natural environment are created in the form most favorable to their perfect harmonization. That the creation is perfect, then, is illustrated by the fact that it affords adequate conditions upon which dependent persons may determine perfect dependent personality.

But since one person cannot determine the self-determining of another, but can only determine conditions upon which another may or must determine himself, it is also true that the conditions thus imposed may be modified by the persons who act upon them, using or abusing them, or determining themselves otherwise than in harmony with them. It is evident that in conditioning the finite perfection of dependent persons the Creator enables them to condition his own action. Hence we may affirm of the conditions to a perfect universe that they must be the joint product of the Creator and creatures; and this is the same as to say that the perfectness of creative action implies original conditions which, though modified by dependent persons, may yet serve as a basis upon which

errors may be corrected, and dependent persons may realize the divine ideal of dependent personality.

Since, then, the two factors which determine the universe are divine love, affording the original conditions, and dependent persons, determining themselves upon these conditions—or upon these conditions as modified in and by themselves—since these factors determine the universe, the perfection of it depends upon the willing interaction of dependent persons with the independent. This interaction is, of course, the work of finite persons conforming themselves to the nature which creative love has given them; and they do this by reciprocating that love by devotion to God as absolute perfection. This is their highest devotement to the perfect One—pure, unalloyed love.

Self-love, which is devotement to self-perfection, is not only in harmony with this supreme love toward God, because he is infinite perfection, but is anticipated and comprehended by it; its highest realization results as incident to this supreme devotement to the absolutely perfect One. For a dependent person to love the infinitely perfect One supremely, trusting that his own best self will be attained incident therewith, is trusting that his devotion to supreme perfection will determine his self-perfection. The supreme action, love toward God, reacts to the accomplishment of one's best self, which is the object of pure self-love. Love of the infinite ideal which is actualized in God comprehends devotion to the ideal in one's self, and realizes the ideal life.

This voluntary committing the fortunes of self-love to his supreme love of God, by a dependent person, is faith in its highest form. Next to it is that faith which risks the interests of the *actual* self by seeking them as only incident to the realization of his *ideal* self.

Love toward fellow finite beings, which is devotion to their perfecting, is likewise of a piece with this same supreme devotion to the perfect.

Moreover, supreme devotion to the perfect, steadfast love toward God, comprehending and developing pure self-love and universal mutual love, is holy, because of its perfect intention. It achieves, also, the supreme good, because it realizes practical perfection. It is perfect dependent being in companionship with independent being.

These affirmations, concerning the actual universe which shall realize love's ideal, warrant the affirmation that the perfect universe must be (1) harmonious as unity, (2) free as caprice, yet (3) secure as fate. These three grand characteristics are all self-conscious in love, and are to be enacted, determined, by finite persons, perfectly loving God upon the conditions which creative love affords.

1. If I were the only person in existence I would be at liberty to do as I please; but as soon as another person exists the perfection of our existence implies that our action shall be harmoniously adjusted toward each other; and if I have established the conditions of his existence he is dependent upon me, and he must determine his harmonization with me by acting in harmony with these conditions. This assumes, of course, that the conditions of his being which I have established are essentially harmonious in themselves and with me. So, also, when another and another person come to exist upon the same conditions the perfection of this community of beings cannot be achieved save by their choosing to act in harmonious adjustment to each other; and such action will be accomplished only by their acting in harmony with the common conditions which I have established for their existence. Hence, it is clear that perfection implies com-

plete harmony in all the action and interaction of persons who exist in relation to each other. However vast may be the number of persons composing the personal universe, the same truth applies. The perfection of the universe necessarily implies complete harmony in all their multiplied relations, and each one bears his part in determining this harmony.

2. Freedom, the largest self-determining freedom possible to dependent beings, must be affirmed of the perfect universe. Since personality consists in self-determination, and perfect self-determination is perfect personality, or independent being, perfect dependent personality implies the greatest degree of self-determining freedom consistent with dependence of being. And since a perfect universe is one of the highest interaction of finite with infinite being, it follows that the highest degree of self-determination possible to dependent persons is requisite to a perfect universe.

But the self-determining freedom of a conditioned person means freedom to act upon his natural conditions; he may use or abuse these conditions. If he abuse them he may modify them and thus impair them as conditions to his interaction with the independent or with his fellow-dependent beings, and thus debase his conditions, render them more limiting to his freedom, and thus narrow its scope. Free action may be circumscribed in the scope of its operation, but is never clearly thinkable as modified in the quality of freedom. Self-determination is free. If not free it is not self-determining. Restriction of scope limits the extent to which freedom may be exercised, but does not impair its free quality within the scope where it is exercised. There may be action which is free in some respects, but restricted in others. In the respects in which it is free it is completely so; in the respects in which it

is restricted it is without freedom. Hence, it follows that as a person may, by abuse, impair his natural conditions he may increase his limitations, restrict and ultimately crush his freedom. Thus it appears that the widest range of freedom possible to each dependent person must be self-determined. If he had been created at that high and wide range of freedom the maintenance of that range must be by his self-determination. If creation places him in conditions of a lower and narrower scope which he may gradually outgrow or expand, and thus progressively rise to the highest and widest range of freedom possible to a dependent person, he must accomplish it by his own self-determination.

It is clear, then, that a perfect universe, harmonious in the action and interaction of Creator and creature, must be determined finally by the creature. The theologians of a past day contended much over the harmonization of "divine sovereignty" and human "free-will." Had they clearly considered that the Creator's objective action is but to *maintain the conditions* upon which dependent persons may arise and determine a perfect universe, it could not have been difficult to find scope for human freedom; and since this conditioning action is self-chosen by the Creator, they could just as easily have seen divine sovereignty, independence, exercised in his *imposing upon himself* the obligations and conditions which human freedom implies.

3. Security, the assurance against disharmony, notwithstanding the largest finite freedom, must characterize a perfect universe. A person who is susceptible to evil temptation is not perfect, nor is a universe perfect which is liable to discord and defection. It does not realize perfect conditions to companionship of finite persons with each other or with the Infinite Being. Nor can it realize

his ideal to the Creator or achieve his purpose in creation. Perfect interaction of finite with infinite cannot be thought as tainted with a shade of apprehension or suspicion of ill.

Here, indeed, is a dilemma: The largest freedom of dependent persons is requisite to the conception of a perfect universe, yet this freedom cannot but be thought a continual menace to its harmony; and a menace to harmony is imperfection. The perfect universe must be harmonious, must be free, yet must be secure against the dangers of freedom. This security cannot be attained by any necessitative measures. It must be maintained along with the largest finite freedom. But it must contain an improbability of defection so great as to be practically equivalent to an impossibility. Or, to state it positively, the *probability* of steadfastness must be practically equal to *certainty*.

Moreover, such perfect knowledge of his relationship toward God and his fellow-beings as will preclude discord by error, mistake, is implied in each person in order that the perfect harmony of the universe may not be marred by harmful inadvertence.

Such is the moral security which is implied in the conception of a perfect universe—a security which is not the result of force or fate, though it render the improbability of discord or defection practically equal to fate. The fact that it is a *moral* security implies that it is determined by dependent persons themselves. It must be that experienced demonstration of faith of which perfect love toward God is conscious, and which comprehends the realization of self-love. After this demonstration is achieved the supreme devotion to God as absolute perfection, which had demonstrated this faith, abides in augmented intensity and power. Hence it appears that



the supreme love of finite persons toward God determines their eternal security in universal harmony—a personal harmony of which they can be fully conscious only in the consciousness of the fullest freedom of dependent beings. This perfection of finite persons in harmony, freedom, and security may be determined by and in themselves upon the original conditions which the creation affords.

But this perfection of the universe is simply perfection in kind, not in degree; in quality, not in quantity. Though unspeakable good as well as unutterable ill may have attended its development, the object of creation, namely, the highest possible conditioned good, has not yet been realized. The conditions adequate to its achievement have just been established; and these, let it be said again, are perfect *harmony, freedom, and security*. The objective scope for God's altruistic freedom is only now attained. In his personal perfection, doubtless, God is conscious of perfect altruistic freedom; but in a perfect universe, in kind, he finds perfect objective altruistic scope. The altruistic intent is perfectly self-conscious in the Creator, but it does not realize perfect objective self-consciousness until conscious of the perfect harmonization with itself of the dependent persons who are its objects. This consciousness of their perfect harmonization must include his consciousness of their fullest freedom and self-determined security. The perfect universe, perfect in kind, is thus opened to the practical altruistic freedom of divine love.

The qualities and powers which are capable of endless progress are implicit in the universe of dependent persons, now perfect in their harmony, freedom, and security, and constitute but the unembarrassed opportunity, as a foundation, for that good which it is the purpose of love to bestow. Whatever may have been the method of the

creative process is not pertinent to this question. Even though incalculable periods of the Creator's objective activity may have preceded a period of "fire mist," which scientists suppose, it could only evince how deep and wide this foundation is laid. This perfect universe, perfect in self-determined harmony, freedom, and security, is the completed foundation which intimates how massive is the superstructure of good which love purposes to build thereupon.

"The good of being" has a composite meaning. What it comprehends we cannot tell. We only use the term "good" to express what is of real interest, benefit, value, satisfaction. It is the being or possessing that which gives value to one's self. Hence, it may be increased or diminished in finite beings. Of the absolutely perfect Being we say he is "the infinite good"; and the communion and harmony of finite beings with him yields to them their supreme good. It does this because it exalts them to their highest realization of themselves and their highest appreciation of all others, and hence gives to their existence its greatest value. Hence, it is true that "Love is its own reward," the supreme good. But since love is perfect action, the infinite resource, its evolution implies limitless development of good. To finite beings who are secure in their amplest freedom and harmony there opens up an endless progress in the experience of good.

Harmony, freedom, and security are thus the immediate conditions to the highest conditioned good. Upon the natural conditions which the Creator's action posits dependent persons determine these as leading characteristics of a perfect universe. These self-determined characteristics of a universe thus perfected in kind become conditions upon which the universe is elaborated in de-

gree. The perfection of creation, or nature, is in the affording the primary conditions upon which these characteristics can be determined by finite persons. The perfection of the universe consists in the adequacy of these self-determined characteristics to condition the unalloyed and largest good of dependent being. That they *are* adequate conditions readily appears. Harmony implies the perfect interaction of dependent persons with their own natures, and perfect harmony of action with each other and with their environment. Since love is the nature of the Creator's action, loving reciprocation of that action by dependent persons, in common, renders their relations to God and each other entirely holy and beneficent. With love as the all-conditioning and coördinating action dependent persons interact, and thus harmonize each with all. Perfectly harmonious interaction of dependent with independent must be able to realize the highest and most real good of which a dependent universe can be thought capable. Harmonious personal adjustment, carried forward without interruption by either error or willful disharmony, is the only thinkable basis upon which dependent persons can realize their highest good as individuals and universally. The creative nature being the common conditioning ground, their perfect adjustment to it must assure that good which is its grand creative purpose.

Moreover, this harmony secures the right of self-love, individual devotion to ideal selfhood, in all. Pure self-love implies the perfection of each for the perfection of all. Love, devotion to realizing the ideal, enacting the perfect, being the law of universal adjustment, carries with it that devotion to the ideal self which is self-love. Hence, love, dominating all personal interaction, implies the harmonization of all individual self-love. Love, as

self-love, is able to attain its highest good, not only because it actualizes its ideal self, but because its ideal self actualized is its best practical self. This actualized ideal, or perfect self, is an egoism which affords the highest altruistic freedom, is capable of the greatest objective unselfishness. This is to say that one's best self is his best not only for himself, but for all others; and that self-love, which is devotement to one's best self, is at one with all love, not only in that it seeks to realize ideal being in one's self, but in that it is one with unselfishness toward others. That perfectly harmonious interaction of dependent and independent being must condition the highest good is evinced by this implication of love, namely, that the highest good of any dependent being is attained only in harmony with the highest good of all being.

Again, if this universal harmony have in it the consciousness of the largest freedom possible to dependent persons, and also the consciousness of perfect moral security, the conditions to the highest good must be thought complete.

What purpose or purposes, what definite activities, may give form to the highest good, it is not ours to affirm, but we may be sure that love to God, that the pursuit of communion with, and deeper knowledge of, God will be the grand devotement of all who would realize the supreme good. No matter how high or low may be the nature of finite persons, the actual perfection of God must always and to all alike be the infinite ideal to which they may be forever supremely devoted, which they may forever commune with and be assimilated to, and which will ever be the supreme moral criterion in the faith, hope, and love of the universe—the reality and glory of all its exploitation and achievement. This devotion to the infinite ideal is the love which, in finite persons, in-

cludes devotion to an ideal self, realizing pure self-love, and its devotion to the true in all things. Devotion to the infinite perfection reacts in their characters and expresses itself in their activities among themselves, and realizes the supreme good of dependent persons. This companionship with the infinite affords the further objective determination of divine love, and is the grand purpose of creation.

*A progressive universe, only, can achieve these three grand characteristics which condition the highest good.* Perhaps it may be urged that perfect intelligence might preclude disharmony; and that God might create dependent beings with such perfect intuition and vast susceptibilities and powers that they could grasp at once the entire finite conception and full significance of divine love, and reciprocate that love in the full measure of dependent being. Some such creation is what certain sensational philosophers, such as Mr. John Stuart Mill, argued is necessary to prove from the world that it is the work of a perfect Creator. Persons, it is supposed, who are created in such perfection of powers might avoid all error in the exercise of their freedom. Created with the highest finite ability to know and do, they could avoid all error, and in the fullest detail accomplish the highest harmonies of being.

All this is very fine for the imagination, but has nothing for the reason. In the first place, it assumes an insight into "how being is made"—a question totally beyond the scrutiny of human thought. It assumes, also, that the personal character, or, what is the same, the qualities of the personal action, of one person can be determined by another; which, as we have seen, is a contradiction. That a being of perfect finite nature can be created we do not deny, but personal character is self-determined.

Although we may not deny that persons may be created with perfect perceptions of their entire condition and relation, so as to be free from error, and with the largest freedom to act accordingly, affording the greatest natural facility to continue in harmony with these conditions, yet it cannot be affirmed that these persons cannot or will not selfishly choose to enjoy the pleasures and powers of their actual selves rather than continue in supreme devotion to the ideal. Such an affirmation is made upon the assumption that perfect intelligence which will preclude error will also preclude willful wrong; that there can be no such thing as an entirely willful wrong. This is not a merely modern assertion, but it is just as absurd, hoary as it is, as any newborn fallacy. A person of perfect finite nature cannot choose to enjoy his actual powers rather than devote them to loving and serving the Infinite, forsooth?

The fact must always remain that even to a person created with the highest conditioned powers there must be unexplored, perhaps ever inscrutable, mysteries in the absolutely perfect One. Finite thought finds no parallax between the humblest and mightiest conditioned powers from which to measure the distance to the unconditioned One "with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." The question is, can the one be created more steadfast in his devotion to the perfect One than the other? The field for faith must ever abide. Will the highest created intelligence make that faith more steadfast? The greatest finite powers may be proportionally as great a temptation to their selfish use as the lowly capabilities of the humblest person. The pleasure and ambition incident to the selfish enjoyment of these lofty natures cannot be thought less, in proportion, than those of lower types of being. Not less but perhaps more

probable is it that they would choose the splendid gratification of their actual self rather than devotion to the ideal.

Still, it may be argued that in their perfect perception of their entire relationship they must be thought incapable of error as to the complete advantage of right and the disastrous result of wrong. For them to abide in harmony is to enjoy clearly perceived good and to avoid self-evident ruin. This reduces their motives to those of merely hope and fear; and not one such person can be conscious of security in his devotion to the right were his knowledge of results removed. Their security is the security of circumstances. Yet self-determined superiority to circumstances is the exact measure of perfect personal security; and it is essential to complete consciousness of personal freedom and harmony. These requisites of a perfect universe and essential conditions to the highest conditioned good must be self-determined; and finite self-determination is *progress*.

Self-determination of superiority to circumstances, superiority to motives of hope and fear, cannot be thought possible to conditioned beings except as devotion to right. Rising superior to already experienced good for the sake of higher communion with infinite perfection is the exercise of faith—an exercise which confirms the love and gives higher determination to personality. Love toward a perfect God, whose infinite perfection is believed in, and that risks the interest of self-love as incident thereto, is a self-determination above known circumstances and superior to known satisfactions. Upon this faith in God, as the unconditioned perfect, the conditioned person determines the secure steadfastness of his love as devotion to the perfect, conditioned and unconditioned.

But where all that a conditioned mind can ever grasp

or commune with is openly and at once perceived the only conceivable scope for faith would be for him to break away from the pleasurable spontaneities of his circumstances and, for the sake of determining a conscious superiority to them, plunge into certain ruin. Thus the highest realization of conditioned personality could be reached only through disaster. From this eminence a devil thus determining in himself a consciousness of superiority to hope or fear might truly say :

That strife

Was not inglorious, though the event was dire.

Nor could this supposedly perfect universe of happy utilitarians ever parry his grim sarcasm, "Doth Job serve God for naught?"

In a word: 1. The creation of an unconditioned person or universe is not possible to thought. 2. The creation of a perfect conditioned person or universe would be the creation of perfectly self-determined character; which is a contradiction. 3. The creation of a person or universe in the highest conditioned perfection implies that they cannot determine themselves as anything other than their nature, except worse; implies that the danger of the abuse of their freedom is canceled by their perfect perception of good and ill results. 4. This, again, reduces the universe to one in which fear and reward are the highest motives; hence not one of the highest moral character, nor one of love. In such a universe love can exist only as following an instinct or spontaneity; not as supreme, self-determined devotement. To thus choose to drift spontaneously with their nature has no security except devotion to actual self, selfishness.

It might protect against mere error in judgment, but evinces no security against deliberate choice to abuse power or privilege. There is nothing to indicate that the



choice to pass from pure self-love to selfishness is not immanent and easy in the highest, as in the lowest, finite person; and this is the passing from harmony to disharmony. No matter how nearly infinite the finite persons might be created, their free choice to love or refuse to love God and each other, to use or abuse their powers, is nevertheless an essential condition upon which the moral dignity and harmony of the universe depend. Nothing can protect the Creator's purpose, the bestowal of the highest good of being, from utter defeat if they so will.

Since there is no ground upon which it may be affirmed that a self-determining person or universe, created at the highest possible point of intelligence and power, would be secure against disharmony it must be admitted that such cannot be thought the perfect creation; cannot condition a perfect universe.

Moreover, it must be admitted that disharmony upon such conditions must be complete disaster. To sin in the light of the highest possible finite intelligence leaves no motive nor susceptibility to motive upon which the sinner could be recovered. Hence there is nothing to prevent the utter defeat and overthrow of the object of creation. Their sinning in the midst of the highest finite intelligence and motivity exhausts all susceptibility to incentives which might induce their recovery; and must leave them incapable of honest repentance or gracious restoration. Absolutely nothing remains by which the utter disintegration of the personal universe can be averted save force and fear; and this, as we have seen, would be an utter failure of the purpose of love's objective determination.

To destroy the erring or sinning one by exercise of power in any way would make fear of destruction the

highest motive to righteousness among all finite persons; would make personal safety the highest good. It is needless to argue how impossible it is to instigate love in any high degree by fear, but it is perfectly clear that a universe in which hope and fear are the highest motives can never realize an ideal universe. Under such motives perfect finite personality cannot be attained. Though created in the highest finite perfection of knowledge and power, it would not be a perfect universe the moment its security consciously depends upon hope and fear as its highest motives. Love would not appear as self-sufficient, as able to realize its objective ideal or achieve perfect beneficence; hence, not as the nature of perfect being. Moreover, the suspicion that selfishness may be capable of greater power and pleasure than love, that it is the chief good, would haunt the universe forever—a suspicion which God would appear unable to meet, and love unable to allay. Is love the nature of the independent, unconditioned, perfect being? Is God the best God that might be? Is a love-determined universe the best universe? Is the moral authority which love, the divine nature, imposes a reality? Does it rightfully dominate conscience? May not both the obedient and disobedient despise him whom only might "hath made greater"? These are questions which dwell in the bosom of that suspicion which, unanswered, must eat out the moral fiber of the universe.

But a perfect creation, by love, must not only condition a perfect universe, but must imply in case of disharmony *the least possible* suffering of calamitous results; hence, we must affirm that—

*The lowest point of intelligence and power at which self-determining action can arise is that at which ultimately perfect dependent personalities should originate.*

This, in order (1) that their disharmonies may have the minimum of ill result—capable of inflicting the least possible harm upon themselves or each other; (2) that they may have the widest field of corrective conditions, and the largest susceptibility to remedial motives.

At this lowest point of intelligence and power their errors and moral antagonisms are less potent to inflict woe upon themselves or the world. Their experience of the ills of disharmony will thus find them in the conditions most susceptible to its corrective tendency. The regretful experience of its pains and disadvantages becomes the opportunity for higher motives and advanced moral wisdom. And thus the largest scope for moral recuperation and remedial measures is secured. But were persons created at the highest stage of finite intelligence and power, the probability of disharmony would be as great, if not greater. If they chose disharmony their power for evil would be the maximum, while the highest incitement to harmony would be exhausted. No remedy remains but punishment of the offenders, no higher motive to the unoffending than fear, and that in its most selfish form. The highest created heaven of such beings could become at any time an irretrievable hell.

Since, then, a perfect universe is one which cannot be *created* perfect, nor forced into perfection, but must be self-determined and therefore must be progressively developed, the created conditions upon which it is determined must be regarded perfect in that, while adequate to the end, they afford *the minimum of ill* and *the maximum of good* which are incident to the process. The perfection of creation is in its affording perfect conditions upon which a perfect universe can be evolved from the lowest stage, in order that every irreparable ill may be avoided, every abuse corrected, every wound healed, every

error eliminated, and every disharmony remedied by rising to higher harmonies. All this is implied in love, ever evolving its conditioning activities along the lines of holiness and benevolence.

The divine benevolence can find complete determination only in a progressive creation which founds dependent personality at the lowest degree of intelligence and power at which personality can arise. Although the errors of dependent persons in such a deep vale of ignorance and weakness may be many and great, those errors are schools of instruction in the experience of the bad tendency of wrong and the excellence of right. This, too, with little or no guilt on the part of the erring ones.

Moreover, their experience thus gained is the greatest possible in proportion to their intelligence in other respects. Thus their innocently gained knowledge of the merit of right and the demerit of wrong is in the greatest possible proportion to their general stage of development; and by so much are they proportionately better armed against the liability to intentional wrong than if created in the full-orbed powers of finite being.

Further, in the event of their committing intentional wrong they experience in this lowly state a correspondingly *low degree of guilt*. The turpitude of their sin is the minimum of moral evil which may result from wrong intention; and the depraving influence which such guilt may impose upon the general character is the least possible.

Added to these considerations, it is evident *the power to harm each other* must be of the lowest practicable degree. It must have the least subtlety to beguile, the least skill to injure, the least efficiency to dominate the actions and interests of others. It may, indeed, have more of the brute, but far less of the fiend.

*The susceptibility to recovery* by renouncing wrong as such, and the devotement to right under these circumstances, is the greatest possible. Such recovery comes to the erring or sinning when they have sustained, relatively, the slightest degree of damage to their natures, and when there is before them, relatively, the largest term of discipline and development in which to become confirmed in devotion to right, to undo the damage of past wrong, and develop the greatest degree of adaptation and habit in righteous being. True, the process is beset with great ignorance and attended by many failures and lapses, but the will is sovereign and efficient in the moral intentions of the most ignorant as well as in those of the most enlightened of finite persons. The mistake, the lapse, the fall, occurring within the arms of that benevolence which provides that it shall take place in the simpler and least harmful conditions, encourages to righteous endeavor and affords corrective wisdom.

*Ignorance and weakness*, from the above considerations, stand out as important conditions which love imposes as essential to the determination of perfect finite personality. By means of error the moral discipline gained is immeasurably greater, in proportion to the degree of intelligence and power, in a person who has been progressively developed to a high stage of capability than it can possibly be in one who is created at once at the same altitude of natural powers. Though he be weak and ignorant as a peasant he may love with the sincerity of a seraph. This preponderance of the moral over the natural personality facilitates the spiritual determination of the person vastly in advance of his formulated knowledge; and by so much is his arrival at the point of moral security in advance of the attainment of his largest scope for freedom. Acids, razors, and engines, in the hands

of children, are implements of destruction, but in the hands of the skilled and strong are useful instruments. So, also, great intelligence and power, in the hands of infantile moral development, would be weapons of destruction, destructive forces, but wielded by securely self-determined love are instruments and forces of good. Hence, the greatest preponderance of devotion to the good over capability for evil is gained by a person or universe created in the lowest conditions possible for moral development.

Moreover, the corrective discipline of error, by its pains and inconveniences, which result from collision with all-conditioning love, must tend to dissuade from intentional wrongdoing, deter the rise of sin. And should intentional sin arise, its self-defeat is facilitated by its blundering incoherence when ignorantly or feebly perpetrated.

Thus ignorance and error have a mission in the natural world, affording conditions to the earliest realization of the harmony, largest freedom, and security which must characterize the perfect universe. Not only is it true that "to err is human," but to err is *natural*. "For the creation was subjected to vanity, not of its own will, but by reason of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God."

This is the true "bitter-sweet" doctrine. It differs from the doctrine, so called, which includes sin, intentional wrong, as natural. Sin is thus made a necessity to the universe, and God is under obligation to it for the realization of his purposes. This we repudiate wholly as having no foundation or natural place in the evolution of love. Sin is unnatural, and must be disposed of as such. But error is naturally incident to the dependent

objects of love's evolution; which conditions the rise of moral consciousness in them at the lowest possible stage of personal intelligence and power. This is the only sense in which there is a divinely authorized "ministry" of ignorance, weakness, and pain; and this is the sense in which ignorance, and feebleness of mind and body, and an environment of hardship are imposed by creative perfection as conditions to the development of perfect finite personality.

The greatest of innocent errors is the hope of finding a permanent finite ideal; the pursuing a finite ideal, expecting it to be a satisfying perfection, in kind and degree, when once realized. Whether it be a babe, weary of its rattlebox, but supremely devoted to a newly possessed hobbyhorse, or a millionaire devoted to the acquisition of additional millions, the story is the same. The conquest of the world, realized, is not the ideal for which the conqueror weeps. "We gather shells from youth to age; and then we leave them, like a child." The worn-out pleasure-seeker is puzzled to understand how it was that he could have pursued with such intense ardor the objects for which now he has only satiety and loathing. The secret is simply this in every case: his love sought satisfaction in only finite ideals.

But even this greatest of errors has its mission. The cloying sweets, the weariness of toys, the disappointment of wealth, pleasure, pain, teach that "One is good, that is God." There is one perfect—the ever-actualized, infinite ideal. This alone can afford the absolute authority of the ideal, and hold by its infinite charm and motives a steadfastly progressive, eternal devotement of a free universe. "Love is its own reward," and to interact in progressive companionship, by supreme devotion to God, can alone be to finite persons their supreme good.

To attain to freely self-determined security in conscious harmony with him is to achieve, incidentally, an ideal selfhood which is the goal of a pure self-love. But we can affirm this is an actualized ideal self *in kind, only*. It realizes unwavering security in the largest scope of finite freedom; but is just now wholly fitted to achieve the unqualified good of progressive companionship with God.

*Naturally irretrievable wrong* can be only in the case of those persons who cling to error, though conscious of its erroneous nature. To correct the supreme wrong of supreme devotion to finite objects, when its erroneousness is disclosed, is to restrict it to the category of innocent error; which does no violence to the persons' essential adjustment to the Creator's purpose. But to indulge the practice of wrong for the enjoyment of its temporary interest is to do intentional wrong, is to break with the natural harmony, and pervert all his natural conditions by self-determined devotion to one's actual self. This is selfishness, antagonism to love. A machine in which all the centers of motion are in true adjustment is essentially harmonious, and will eventually wear down and smooth off the rough and uneven surfaces and edges of cogs and pulleys, and finally wear to perfect and permanent harmony. So, also, supreme love to God and mutual love among themselves is the true adjustment of dependent persons which constitutes the essential harmony of the world. If this harmony is maintained the errors and misfortunes incident to a weak and ignorant world are superficial inequalities and rough edges of conditioned life which will, eventually, be worn away, and their ill results neutralized by the harmonious tendency of love's adjustments. Thus the creation perfectly conditions dependent persons in essential harmony which, if main-



tained, will constantly develop more intimate and elaborate harmony with God's perfect action, and ultimately realize security in the perfection of the universal personal adjustment of finite with infinite being.

The chief difference between the machine and the universe is that adjustment in one is maintained by its maker, while in the personal universe the essential adjustment is only conditioned by the Creator, but is determined for himself by each dependent person. Because of this self-determination in each person the superficial inequalities and errors resulting from ignorance and weakness are not the only disturbances to which the world is liable.

*The Preternatural.*—We use the term simply in the sense of "aside from natural," or perverted nature. The power of finite persons to change their adjustment toward God and toward their fellow men, and abuse and pervert their own natures and natural relations, enables them to render the entire scheme of their conditions unnatural. Fire affords conditions to comfort, health, manufacture, commerce, and wealth, but if abused affords the most horrible conditions of disaster and torture. So the Creator's love affords the conditions to the determination of the greatest good, but if abused, perverted by maladjustment, these conditions may be made vast organized forces for evil. But the change is not in divine love, the action which establishes natural conditions. Natural conditions are modified by the false self-adjustment of dependent persons. Hence, if restoration to the natural is ever achieved by such persons it must be by their changing their attitude to one of true harmony with the creation.

By self-perversion dependent persons may induce illusions which obscure cardinal facts, although disaster and defeat frequently recall them to a sense of these facts.

They may curse nature and fight "natural law," but natural forces will keep right on, maintaining the fact of the Creator's independence. Neither can they always avert their attention from the fact, *conscience*, the authority of the perfect which morally conditions their intentions until, "in their thoughts, they accuse each other," according to this criterion. But because of their self-determining freedom it must be thought possible for them to so pervert and debase their personality as to become unsusceptible to the beneficent incitements of love as expressed in the natural world.

So elaborately organized, complex, and fascinating may selfish forms of pleasure, culture, and enterprise become as to mislead or beguile sincere minds for indefinite periods of time. The willful wrong of one age may become the conventional habit of succeeding ages, and the selfish excesses of one generation mold the natural instincts or establish the tastes of their descendants. The universal prevalence of selfish desire and practice may establish a general devotion to actual self which, in its most alleviating forms of utilitarianism, may hopelessly displace all faith in the ideal, and discard all devotion to abstract truth as visionary and fanatical. Utilitarianism in every form may, within the benevolent forbearance of love's natural conditions, construct alleviations to this riot of selfishness. It may boast of this as chief good, forgetting or ignoring that all its benignities are owing to the benevolence of the Creator; and that its garnished thrift of readjusted selfishness is only tolerable because it is permitted to nestle in the bosom of love's forbearance. Thus dependent persons may condition themselves by modifying their natural susceptibilities and external conditions, totally obscuring all incitement or motivity to loving devotion to the perfect.

If this obscuration of susceptibility and incitement to the ideal fail to become total, it must be because the *rational* demand for the Independent—the actual experience of dependence and the authority of the perfect in conscience—asserts itself more or less in the midst of all finite perversion and sham. Their essential dependence upon the Independent, demonstrated ever and anon in the self-defeat of selfishness, ever reminds dependent persons of the self-sustained independence of natural forces. Likewise the persistent authority of the holy, the perfect, can never be bribed to approve wrong intention in the personal conscience. But in personal self-determination there may be the entire perversion of all perception of the real good, and total obliteration of its motivity to incite love toward the Creator. Moreover, the prosperity of selfishness must tend to establish a sincere conviction that the Independent is indifferent to good or evil, and that perfection is but a chimera, while the bitterness of conditions as perverted by selfishness tends to obscure the benevolence of the Creator, and even suggests a question of his existence.

Human history illustrates these implications of possible distortion and defeat of natural conditions by self-determined devotion to actual self; that is to say, by selfishness. When devotement to actual self is thus decided upon, all the natural methods of divine love's interpretation are refracted like rays of light when passing through a dense medium. Not only the secret feelings of individuals, but often the philosophies, enterprises, and collective sentiment of mankind, evince their perversion. Their desire for God is only a desire for an almighty convenience, and when this convenience is not apparent their faith in the benevolence, or even existence, of God is shaken.

Selfishness demands that divine action shall give up its

ideal, and devote its energies to mere almsgiving to man as he actually is—claims that to bless himself as he actually is, without reference to what he ought to become, is man's first right; and to extort benefits from his fellow men is a proper use of his intelligence and power. This is human welfare as viewed by the philosophies of selfishness. Hence, they complain that human life is "the worst possible" because of the discomforts experienced by actual self. The perfection of self, toward which love conditions all human striving, and to achieve which any sacrifice it demands of actual self is small, is ignored. Since the evolution of divine love conditions all persons with reference to their subjecting the actual to the ideal, the friction and hardship which come to man by his misappropriating his conditions are beyond computation. The spleen of a Cain is nothing but devotion to the actual self which recognizes God as only a servitor to selfishness. Idolatry is but the apotheosis of actual, imperfect self. Its gods are merely large men as men actually are, not as they may and ought to become by devotement to that ideal manhood which is authorized by the actual perfection of the unconditioned Person, God.

Pessimists think this the worst possible world because the satisfaction of their present actual self is their criterion of good; and because our natural conditions are not favorable to selfish satisfaction. The atheist insists that if the world were the creation of a perfect being it and our race would have been created in the highest finite perfection; and, hence, would be perfectly happy. In his view *actual* being, of any type, is the criterion of what is, or ought to be good. All these views are from the standpoint of selfishness, which only wishes to place the actual, imperfect self in a position where it may be wholly a recipient, and but selfishly a factor, of benefi-

cence. In a word, they ignore the need of a progressive actualization of the ideal in order that personal perfection may be actually attained and forever secured. They fail to recognize that neither power, knowledge, nor pleasure, but love, is the nature of perfect action, and alone can yield a perfect universe.

Because love is love and is capable of mercy it has conditioned the continuance of our selfish race. Nay, more, these merciful conditions in which sin is permitted to make a full demonstration of itself—conditions which can afford correction, discipline, and recovery to the sinner—these conditions afford at least temporary prosperity to sin and success to selfishness. Nothing in our world, it is true, seems more successful than selfishness, nothing more jubilant and arrogant than the triumphs of selfish devotement. On this account the benevolence of divine love becomes the opportunity of sin. Benevolence is made, by man, to abet selfishness. Love becomes the servant of its enemy, and its activities are used as the instruments of his crimes. Not only does it afford scope for sin's continuance, but encourages it. That "the goodness of God leadeth to repentance" is overlooked. It tends to establish the conviction in the race that the creation is indifferent, perhaps favorable to selfishness. Thus the determination of the Creator's benevolence affords conditions, for a period at least, for the prosperity of the wicked. Nothing but faith in God prevents the best men from conceding the ultimate triumph of selfishness. How often in the history of man have thoughtful persons expressed their despair of the ultimate triumph of right, how often deplored the triumph of wrong—"Truth forever on the scaffold, Wrong forever on the throne"!

*Supernatural intervention* is here irresistibly forced upon us as an implication of conditioning love. It is here

we are compelled to recognize that, in order to condition the realization of a perfect universe, love must evolve other and further than natural incitements to devotion to the perfect. *If the finite universe, or any person or portion of it, is preternaturally conditioned by the general defection, so as to be destitute of the means which naturally lead to devotement to the perfect, there is no recourse but by supernatural means.* The least and lowest form of action which love can take is to be just. But justice would require that the Creator must, in this juncture, cease to tolerate the existence of persons who cause or maintain these preternatural conditions; or else he must supplement the perverted, and hence inefficient, natural conditions with supernatural conditions to ultimate harmony. Love must end them in some way when conditions become so entirely preternatural as to collide with the independence, eclipse the moral authority, and pervert the benevolence of God. In justice, love must permit the preternatural conditions which finite wickedness and weakness have established to work their own immediate destruction; or, in mercy, it must reassert and maintain conditions to perfection by supernatural intervention. The former would be a surrender of the object of creation; the latter would be directly in the line of love's evolution of a perfect universe.

It is easy to see what divine love will do. The whole matter may be stated in a sentence, to wit: The natural conditions of dependent persons, which express to them the independence, moral authority, and benevolent purpose of the Creator, are superseded by the preternatural conditions which these persons, by their self-determined perversity, have interposed, and which may justly be permitted to condition their self-destruction, and which can be avoided only by a merciful supernatural disclosure.

by which divine love will make good to them the original conditions to the determination of their perfection.

It is not, indeed, a question of what divine love *can* do, but what love, in its objective determination, *must and will* do. When the free abuses of dependent persons construct in them a false nature, and around them a false environment, divine love must maintain the conditions to finite perfection by transcending nature. Were our philosophy of creative, or natural, forces merely one of impersonal dynamics we should be puzzled, indeed, to find a basis for the supernatural. But as "creative force" stands, in our thought, for the action of an independent person whose nature is infinite love we have no such puzzle on our hands. We simply inquire, What must divine action, in devotement to perfect being, do? When human perversity misappropriates the benevolence of love by making it the occasion for selfishness; and prosperous selfishness encourages the conviction that the creation is favorable, or at least indifferent, to it; or resulting adversity begets despair, what manifestation does the evolution of love imply? This is the whole question; and there can be but one reply: The Supernatural!

Does this argue, after all, that the creation of dependent persons at the lowest point of intelligence and power at which self-determination may arise is imperfect? By no means! The impairment of their natural conditions is not the impairment of the divine action in nature, but their self-determined abuse of that divine action. As observed before, their freedom is the only menace to essential harmony, and at first glance might seem a defect in the creation, but is, in fact, an excellence—the grand excellence which constitutes them persons, distinguishes the objective universe, and renders possible the eternal companionship of finite with infinite being. The perfec-

tion of creation stands out, also, in that it is the basis upon which dependent persons, through a schooling of weakness and innocent error, may avoid sin, *intentional* wrong, and determine their perpetual harmony, largest freedom, and perfect security. For aught we know, our own race furnishes the only class of persons who have failed on that basis; and possibly more of *them* than we are aware of have maintained or recovered essential harmony without definite intelligence of supernatural motives; that is, by renunciation of selfishness.

Further, by its lowest conditions of personal self-determination it affords the whole determination and defeat of disharmony, caused by either error or design, at the lowest stage of its power to inflict evil upon the world. The earlier demonstration of evil affords the earlier intervention of the supernatural. This also affords, in the case of the willful sinner, the greatest opportunity that wrongdoing may, either in natural or supernatural conditions, prove self-corrective and not retributive. The possible determination of steadfastness in love toward God is at the earliest, and possible incorrigibility at the latest, stage of personal development.

That this supernatural intervention, as seen above, has an object altogether worthy of it needs no argument.

If the question of the *form* of supernatural disclosure is raised, by way of objection to miracles, for example, then we must admit the following affirmations: 1. The only respect in which we can affirm that the activities of God in nature cannot be changed is in *their essential character*, as conditioning the free determination of human perfection by evincing the independence, the perfect moral authority, and the changeless holiness and mercy of God. 2. Any supposable revelation of supernatural motives must reiterate or accord with these. 3.



The phenomenal form in which it may vary from the natural order of phenomena, as perceived by those to whom it is given, does no violence to nature, but distinguishes it as supernatural. This is merely a question of method and adaptation to the persons addressed; and disbelief in miracles, regarded as mere departures from the usual order of God's action in natural phenomena, is but a quibble. 4. If such departure reiterates and emphasizes the essential conditions expressed in nature it bears *prima facie* evidence of its validity.

In the conditions which divine love maintains in all its objective action, natural and supernatural, it makes good to finite persons, who are the objects of its effort, its own independence, its devotion to the perfect, its beneficence, or supreme good, and sacredly recognizes the self-determining freedom of dependent persons. In these conditions it affords the means of their supreme devotion to the perfect, and their realization of companionship with God. Pressing forward to the realization of its objective ideal, the perfect universe, love must be thought as lengthening and widening its benevolence until its majestic ideal is realized. Its benevolent conditioning of progressive life renders evil corrective, not necessarily retributive. If it shall ever become retributive it must be by fixed determination of the wrongdoer who, though convinced of the excellence of love and the despicable nature of selfishness, persists in his ill-chosen course. This he may do, notwithstanding infinite love; and divine force cannot intervene to save him, nor to inflict upon him aught but his own self-determined perversion, his maladjustments to a love-conditioned world. This is but to say that love cannot be thought to reverse its own nature and all its evolution in order to avoid a collision which must be ruinous to the sinner who incorrigibly rejects or perverts

its saving conditions. Incurrigible determination in selfishness is not only the evidence of self-induced limitations of one's personality, but is the continued process of limitation, until personality may be sunken into the limitations of a brute, fiend, or thing. This matter, however, is treated more fully in a later chapter. It is noticed here only as a corollary from the progressive achievement of a perfect universe.

That an independent being determines himself as infinite love, and projects a universe which in its progressive development settles every question, casts off every crudity, wears out every abuse, outlives all antagonism, outgrows all but necessary conditions, and persists, composed of persons fitted by the highest conditioned self-determination to be the finite counterpart of infinite love; that eternity shall be given to the unembarrassed unfolding of love's resources of goodness, power, and glory, in the harmonies of the progressive finite with the perfect infinite—is the only self-sustaining philosophy of the universe.

The divine conception, or ideal, of conditioned being having been wrought by man's reciprocal action into the perfect self-consciousness of freedom, harmony, and security, God will, doubtless, continue his altruistic life, as "from the beginning," Creator, Upholder, Revealer, and Benefactor, without exhaustion of resources or arrest of finite progress. The structure and history of the universe, physical, mental, and moral, continually rounding into a synthesis of love, will continue to illustrate the infinite egoism and limitless altruistic freedom of God.

*Companionship* is the term which perhaps best expresses these implications of love—companionship of the finite with the infinite. This companionship, thus seen to be the bestowal of the highest conditioned good, is implied

as the purpose of the creation. Since companionship is the first form of relationship, as subsisting between the absolute and the relative consciousness in God, it must be thought as underlying and conditioning all other relations which arise in the process of conditioned existence. Hence, this companionship is prime motive to finite minds, and must be the criterion by which to estimate the meaning and value of finite being.

When we think of the Infinite Person seeking to bestow an endlessly progressive companionship, we are hurried on to the conception of a universe of dependent persons, in endless variety of powers, who, sometime and somewhere, may know and enjoy God as nearly as friend does friend; reflecting in relative detail the imaged phases of the absolute nature. And as the love of finite persons, reciprocating that of the infinite, shall develop the being and doing of eternity, faithful in a few things or rulers over many, the splendors of love's evolution will vindicate the creation, and prove to all that the greatest of blessings is *being*.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GENESIS OF EVIL

*An enemy hath done this.—Jesus.*

THE preceding chapter closed with the thought of companionship—companionship of finite beings with the Infinite Being—as the method of the supreme good, the purpose of creation, the realization of a perfect universe. Instead of absorption of the finite by the infinite, which is the outcome of pantheism, we find ever-progressive companionship of finite persons with the infinite to be the outcome of the evolution of love. We recognize this as the divine conception, the divine ideal, of conditioned being—God's finite ideal actualized by finite beings.

We recognize that, upon the conditions which divine love evolves, dependent persons may attain a development which will be perfectly free, except in so far as their existence depends on God. This freedom will be a self-determining which is conscious of no restraint from without, but will be secure in the consciousness of perfect intention, holiness. Perfect intention, the holy quality of love, will assure the harmony of all. Perfect companionship implies perfect mutual confidence as to each other's intention. It can be perfectly self-conscious only in freedom. Security in this free companionship is the grand problem of free being, yet this security is essential to that companionship which realizes ideal being. The perfect personal universe, free as caprice, harmonious as unity, and secure as fate, is what we must recognize as essential in the ideal universe which love seeks to realize in its evolution.

This ideal universe carried out practically will achieve

the highest conditioned good. This good must be thought such that each person, individually, and all persons, universally, may make their being better upon the whole than nonbeing; that their existence may be a positive blessing; and that failure in this can come about only by their own determination. This is the lowest and least degree of good which can be thought in accordance with love as the nature of the force which has chosen to evolve the dependent world. Conscious that love, his nature, is perfect action, God chooses to evolve from it the conditions upon which free, though dependent, persons may determine dependent perfection in themselves, and thereby determine a perfect universe.

The teleological character of the world which love evolves is in this choice. It seeks the perfection of finite being as a requisite end. In this choice, also, is implied the immortality of all persons who cannot find in a limited term of life the conditions upon which they can determine their perfection, and achieve that degree of good which such perfection can attain. Since perfect benevolence is love's motive for creation, and the bestowment of the highest good, perfect beneficence, is its purpose, it is clear that their realization is guaranteed in love as consciously perfect action; guaranteed by its conscious ability to afford the highest conditionable good to dependent beings.

As finite persons are self-determining, within their conditions, it follows that their highest good can be determined by their free conformity to those conditions of their being which love evolves. The faculties and susceptibilities with which they are endowed and the environment in which they are placed constitute part of their conditions, and are means and instruments which creative love furnishes. The proper use of these means and instru-

ments is in achieving the excellence and satisfaction of their being, and, hence, are elements of their good. This use is in their true personal adjustment in interaction with the Creator.

The benevolence of the Creator appears in the fact that the highest good of dependent persons results from a true use of these elements. If in this use their being prove better, more desirable, than nonexistence, then their being is a good. Further, if by ignorant misuse of themselves or of their environment they debase these conditions which love has posited, and yet may determine a life which, upon the whole, is better than nonbeing, then their being is a beneficence, a blessing. Yet again, if they, or others, by willful abuse, may pervert and deprave themselves and the general environment, and yet find it possible to determine reform and ultimately find their way to a true use of their conditions to the extent that their being is, upon the whole, better than nonexistence, then is their being a good so far as the Creator is responsible. And in so far as their existence, in either of these cases, is more desirable than nonexistence, just so far does the graciousness of the creative choice transcend justice.

If, on the other hand, finite persons should realize, in their use of these elements, an undesirable existence, worthless upon the whole to them, then their being is not a good. Or if it prove worse than worthless their being is a positive evil. Further, if by misuse of themselves or their environment they realize that their life is not worth living, then is their being a positive evil. Hence, evil is that practical result which would arise either through failure of a Creator to condition good to finite persons, or by their misuse of their conditions.

But since love is the nature of that action which con-

ditions the existence of finite persons, it implies that the true use of these conditions by them must result in their good. If, therefore, this good upon the whole is thwarted or prevented in any degree it must be by their determination—their free misuse, abuse, of their conditions. This practical result which renders finite being a doubtful good, or even worse than nonbeing, is what, in the largest sense, we term evil.

The questions which arise regarding evil are forced upon us by the experience of evil as an historical fact.

But, aside from this fact, the evolution of love by conditioning the existence of free beings consistently implies the liability of the abuse of those conditioned by the self-same free self-determination which constitutes them persons. Hence, evil which must result from this abuse is a question which must be met.

Up to this point in our outline the evolution of love has disclosed a Creator and creation that are wholly good. But now right across the path of this development there opens to our thought a chasm of well-nigh infinite terror; and in both finite consciousness and human history arises *the appalling fact of evil*.

This fact imposes two leading questions which demand solution. The first is, *How does evil arise in a universe which, originally, is wholly good?* The second is, *How are the difficulties which evil presents to be met and overcome by love, so as to realize perfect benevolence; that is, so as to accomplish a degree of good to finite beings, each and all, which is sufficient to justify the creation; even more, to actualize an ideal universe? More succinctly, How does love in its evolution proceed to determine perfect benevolence, notwithstanding evil?* These questions make up "the problem of evil." The first which confronts us, then, in the solution of this problem, is—

*The genesis of evil.* How can evil arise in a universe which is wholly good?

There is nowhere discernible an original germ, element, or factor of evil in the divine nature or its evolution. There can be no evil in this world except by the disordering of good elements; and this disordering must come through the misadjustment of themselves to all-conditioning love by dependent persons. The notion of a conflict of good and evil, as eternal forces, is a hoary myth. That evil is an "original principle" is a crude assumption.

To define evil as being *a free perversion of self-love, which disorders good elements by wrong adjustment of personal nature and relationship, resulting in disproportionate use, that is, abuse*, takes up all there is in the notion or knowledge of evil. This definition contains a full account of the genesis of evil in a universe which is originally good throughout. The whole conflict betwixt good and evil is a question of the right adjustment of persons—within themselves, each, and among themselves, all—and the resulting use or abuse of faculties and susceptibilities which are good in themselves.

If we contemplate a person in process of sinless development we must see in his conditions these phases of love's evolution; we must see him as the impersonation, the personal enactment, of these definitions: 1. Love is devotion to the realization of ideals. 2. Self-love is devotion to the realization of an ideal self. 3. Ideal being is an imperative criterion for actual finite being. 4. Love's actualization of absolute perfection in the independent being, God, is the source of love's authority in the ideal as the criterion of dependent being. 5. Faith is that supreme confidence in love's ideal, the truth, which subjects the actual to the ideal in all self-determination.



This impersonation, though finite, is an ego who is capable of entire benevolence, unselfishness. He is his best self in being his best for others. Losing his life he finds it. By intentional conformity to the ideal he is holy. In practical conformity to his ideal he is wholly benevolent.

History records one such man, at least—the Man of Nazareth. His undeviating subjection of actual self, amid boundless provocation to the contrary, was faith—that perfect faith “which works by love”; the practical subservience to an all-dominating, though unseen ideal; the actualization of all that is “hoped for” in a pure self-love which, “for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising its shame.” Even if the world could be persuaded that this record is mythical, its portrayal of these characteristics as the requisites of a perfect man—requisites to a life which is wholly good—reflects the deepest convictions of human consciousness. The readiness with which sincere thought, everywhere, yields the first place to this man—over all heroes, real or fictitious—is but the common acknowledgment that his was a truly adjusted life; that if all dependent persons were like him in their self-adjustment the universe would be wholly good.

*The law of universal adjustment is devotion to perfection of being; the conformity of dependent persons to the independent. It is the principle which the Stoics dimly apprehended in their “conformity to nature.” But when we recognize nature as being the systematic activities of divine love which constitute the conditions upon which dependent beings develop themselves we recognize it as personal interaction, companionship, of finite with the infinite, the dependent with the independent. This is only stating that as law which is the spontaneity of love*

as action—the actualization of conditioned perfection by finite persons. The whole philosophy of being, as involved and evolved by love, is expressed in this law. Reality is action, action is life, perfectly adjusted life is love, and love is devotement to the realization of perfect being. The practical evolution of progressive being according to this law shows that self-love, and love toward fellow beings, and supreme love to God are subjectively one. They are identically devotement to perfection of being.

Pure self-love, though necessarily the first development of love in a progressive being, eventually develops love to fellow beings and to God. Hence, it naturally evolves harmonious universal adjustment. This is to say, that the harmony of the personal universe is not dependent upon a theoretic knowledge, in each person, of the relations of his being or of the nature of God, but depends upon the instinctive prompting of self-love. Universal harmony does not depend upon a high degree of intelligence, but may be spontaneously evolved by self-love. It spontaneously prompts a pure, though ignorant, being to seek to realize his best possible self.

The fact of conscious existence gives birth to self-love; the fact of dependence upon others and the fact of interdependence with others lead to the reciprocal adjustment of self-love; and the fact of the dependence of all gives the sense of common dependence upon a common independent; the fact of the independent is the fact of God. Dependence upon this implied fact, the independent, is the simplest form of faith. And faith is the condition out of which love spontaneously arises.

My experience of an abiding interacting force in my physique, consciousness, sensation, perception, reason, feelings, and moral sense gives me the constant basis

upon which I achieve the claims and aspirations of self-love. Interacting with the activities thus given in my nature, I develop a personal egoism in the direction of self-love, and find by experience that they are, each and all, factors of good in me. Not only do I find a resulting good, but also a constantly enlarging conception of higher good than as yet attained. I am "saved by hope" from satisfaction with present good and my present self, and am prompted to the attainment of higher good and a nobler personality. Thus, self-love instigates progressive development.

Experience of the past assures me that this hoped good must be realized, if at all, by my personal development into it; that it must come to me in the form of enlarged capabilities and diminished limitations. Thus, naturally, there arises spontaneously in the vision of self-love a conception of what manner of being I desire, may, and ought to become. This is my *ideal* self. Persons may be ignorant, crude, and weak, but all who have a definite consciousness of themselves do have and use, however unscientifically, the facts, being, self-love, and an ideal, or best, self. This best self, which aspires to association with the perfect, is chief motive to self-love in a rightly adjusted progressive being. It is this to which self-love is devoted.

A perfect self, within my conditions, is an object to which I may be devoted consistently with all other rightful objects. Love never asks of me real self-degradation for the sake of another. The development of self-love, in that it ever seeks to realize perfection, is one with pure love. In it is nothing derogatory to others, but, on the contrary, it finds its best disposition toward others in being its best self. Seeking the highest possible egoism, it realizes the greatest possible altruism. Pure self-love,

in a dependent person, gives birth to pure love toward others. Or, what is the same, devotion to the achievement of a perfect self spontaneously loves others; because love and self-love are subjectively one.

But this same instinctive self-love must practically lead to the recognition of self-love in others as the primary right and guiding devotement of their self-determination. And its natural benevolence must realize in them a love for each other. Their interdependence in attaining the practical interests of self-love must, in a practical way, develop and crystallize as the habit of their being and the central basis of individual and universal good. That which intuitively holds sacred the rights of self-love, in all their relations to each other, must recognize its identity with pure love; its identity with unselfish devotion to the self-perfecting of others. Thus, in practice, uncorrupted self-love is nothing other than love egoistic and altruistic—the harmonizing basis, or law of adjustment, for all dependent persons. Thus self-love in all its grades, as a subjective impulse, instinct, intuition, affection, or devotement, develops love in its altruistic forms as the leading and harmonious mode of action among fellow beings. It spontaneously actualizes that rule of perfect morality, "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

But when the elements of my nature, which are, at once, the action of the Creator and the basis of my interaction with him, are appropriated by my self-love they lead to a yet higher good than what is realized in my relations with finite beings. As ultimate dependence upon God comes to be recognized love toward God, as supreme, is developed from self-love. And as conscience discloses the authority of the perfect, as a moral condition upon which alone my intentions can be self-satisfying,

I identify the divine source of that authoritative ideal self. By so much as self-love apprehends its ideal, and by actualizing it experiences practical good, by so much it develops appreciation of being; and by so much it recognizes and reciprocates the love of its author, God. In striving toward the actualization of ideal selfhood it thus becomes conscious of pure love toward all upon whom it depends. Finding thus, in the fact of dependence and the desire for highest good and the moral imperative of conscience, a changeless base for the ideal self in his nature, as posited by the Creator, man is assured of the harmony of self-love with his love of God, and is reassured in his aspiration to companionship with the perfect. Thus, from the lowest consciousness of personal being, instinctively and spontaneously, it is the nature of self-love to develop supreme love toward God.

In this process each mode of love, self-love, love of fellow beings, and love of God, retains its object and characteristics; and all are wholly good. They each and all realize to the consciousness of the progressive person the definitions given above, namely: 1. Love is devotion to the realization of perfect being. 2. Self-love is devotion to the realization of a perfect, or ideal, self. 3. Ideal being is an imperative criterion for actual finite being. 4. Love's actualization of absolute perfection in God is the source of authority, the ground of moral obligation which is felt to be in the ideal criterion for actual being in man. 5. Faith, the subservience of the actual to the ideal.

In all these definitions the subjective unity of self-love with love of fellow beings and love of God is maintained; and the natural order of their development in rightly adjusted progressive life must be, first, self-love; secondly, love toward fellow beings; thirdly, love toward

God. Each has in it the law of universal personal adjustment, "Devotion to perfection of being." Fidelity to any one of these modes involves fidelity to all. Treachery in one is treachery in all.

It is clear, then, that self-love is not only holy, but has in it that which can keep it holy. As long as one aspires to actualize his best self his self-love abides at one with love, and realizes in practical ways that this companionship with the perfect is his highest conditioned good. A universe of beings, each maintaining a true self-love, maintains essential harmony throughout, and is wholly good.

*Disordered self-love* must disorder the personal determination and misadjust the entire relationship. Thus it must break up companionship with the perfect, and obstruct the method of supreme good. While one dependent person cannot determine others, he does determine himself within his conditions. He determines his love (supreme devotement) and what he will seek as his supreme good. To intend his best self, devoted to realizing self-perfection, can alone be that pure self-love which becomes consciously in harmony with love of fellow beings and of God. Hence, the free intention to become his best self, or to be something other and lower than this, must decide whether or not he will keep his self-love pure—one with love toward God and fellow beings.

We remember that the self-determining intentions of dependent persons, though free, are conditioned. These intentions are formed by the use of the preliminary means of faculties and susceptibilities which are awakened in our nature by external circumstances. Also, their intentions are dependent upon supplementary effort, often continuous and repeated, to give them full determination. Their self-determination, in a word, is by use of prelim-

inary and supplementary means. We bear in mind, too, that this is necessarily the nature of conditioned being, not an arbitrary whim of creation. None but the independent person can determine himself without means or conditions.

*The susceptibility of self-love to perversion*, within these faculties and susceptibilities, is the point of evil inception. Free will is capable of choosing evil, but it is not sufficient to account for the genesis of evil in the absence of susceptibility to motives which incite disorder. One is capable of choosing, as a matter of will, a serpent instead of fish for food, but there is not the slightest probability that he will do so while he has no susceptibility, appetite, for serpents. But if he has an appetite which is susceptible to perversion he may come to desire such food. If we must account for his making such choice it is not sufficient to say, He is free to will it. We must find in his demand for food the possible appetence, or susceptibility, which may be excited and gratified by such food. So, also, the freedom of the will may account for the *possibility* of sin, but not for the *probability*. The improbability of the rise of evil is practically equal to an impossibility, but for the susceptibility to selfishness which may be developed in the righteous satisfaction of pure self-love.

Self-love is susceptible of perversion, *naturally and innocently*. The good and pleasure of actually possessed powers afford a standpoint from which self-love may deem it a hardship to forego them for the sake of attaining other good and pleasure which may be realized in a higher and different, but untried, self-development. Hence arises the liability to abide in the enjoyment of actually attained good, exercising and developing to excess those susceptibilities, or feelings, which it grati-

fies, rather than to use them as the preliminary means, the stepping-stones to unrealized, but higher modes of life. This excessive development of the lower, and the dwarfing by neglect and violation of the susceptibilities to higher motives, disorders the whole system and office of susceptibility, and substitutes an actually attained self for the ideal self which a progressive being must ever hold as the criterion of action, and which is essential to the purity of self-love.

*The probability* of the departure of innocent persons from the purity of self-love lies in this susceptibility to temptation to undue gratification, which arises from naturally and innocently acquired good. Yielding to it they determine an undue development of some of their feelings and powers; and this, too, at the expense of neglecting and violating others. Thus they distort the whole system of motivity which subsists between subjective affections and the objective means of their use in the development of personal character.

*Thus they pervert their relations* toward God and fellow beings. They determine themselves otherwise than according to their created nature. This self-determined distortion of their nature is devotement to the gratification of the actual, the imperfect self. It is the neglect and rejection of that ideal self which is present to them, backed by the authority of conscience, in their progressive nature; and it is the rejection of the method of attaining higher good. Hence it is that the innocent pleasure or ambition which affords a probable choice of the excessive indulgence of actually attained powers may prevent the attaining higher powers and higher good which are to be realized in progressive harmony with universal adjustment, in devotion to perfection of being.

By such perversion of a person and of his relations to



other persons he assumes to be a center to which he demands the interests of all others shall be accommodated; and he becomes an incitement or snare to like perversion in others. Thus selfishness may be established, not only in his determination of himself, but in the world. Thus a pure finite person finds in what he actually is a motive which may lure him from what he should become—lure him into a selfish and, therefore, vicious life. Thus this susceptibility, in all finite persons, menaces the harmony of the universe with motivity to evil. Thus the "freedom of the will" finds the occasion upon which its determination for selfishness is not only possible, but probable.

Human history affords practical illustration, in a thousand ways, of the innocent susceptibility of self-love to a guilty and offensive disorder which, we have seen, must be thought incident to any class of conditioned persons. The primary conditions of human existence, which are established by divine love, provide for the progress of human personality toward conditioned perfection, but in these conditions of progress is the inception of disorder. The knowledge of susceptibility to evil, in conditioned persons, is disclosed by consciousness of their progressive life. It is not dependent upon human experience, but is merely corroborated by it. Human history evinces that the rise of evil in an innocent self-love is not a difficult nor far-fetched conception, but an overshadowing fact, illustrated in the excessive indulgence of some and the repression of other natural and innocent susceptibilities and faculties. This is their abuse. The question of good and evil, as known to the human race, is wholly one of use and abuse. Use is the harmonious employment of faculties, affections, and objects with reference to progressive personal development. Abuse is their dispro-

portionate employment, some in excess, others in repression, and, hence, in disordered relation. Self-love is the self-determining devotement which decides whether in use or abuse it will seek its highest good. *Clinging to actual self and its good, self-love becomes selfishness; and this perversion is the origin of all that has issued in disorder, abuse and degradation.*

Whatever of poetic or allegorical setting may be claimed for the Mosaic account of the "fall of man," it contains the data of a real fall. The "real fall" is the distortion of inner affections which, had they been exercised and gratified under the guidance of a true self-love, would have developed harmonious character. The gratification of curiosity, or appetite, *as means*, could not be otherwise than innocent and good while subject to a better self which the innocent pair maintained by harmony with their Creator, in the simple form of obedience. But, made an *end* to be attained at the expense of their affection for God, this gratification was an abuse, which excessively developed the lower affections and dwarfed or abolished the higher susceptibility of self-love to the perfect. In this action self-love is turned from its devotion to an ideal life, in communion with God, into devotion to actual self and its desires. This is a real fall which rejects free interaction with love and assumes vassalage to an actual but imperfect and now morbid, depraved self.

Nor need we go back to Eden to know the reality of this fall. It is around and in us daily. Selfishness, or, what is the same, perverted self-love, is the acknowledged source and energy of all the other abuses under which humanity groans. As self-degradation has come about by abuse of subjective endowments in their relation to external means, these external means have been wrought

into mighty forces for evil; insomuch that the physical and mental as well as the moral world are filled with evil energies. The possession of the soil and mine, the appropriation of their products, the very air and sunlight are subjected to abuse by man's ethical misadjustment to them.

As to how much of present human selfishness and evil bias is hereditary, or how much is individually self-induced, it is not pertinent to discuss here. We know that our conditions are largely awry by reason of the modifications which human selfishness has imposed upon the original conditions which the Creator posits for our progressive being. Yet science sustains no truth more firmly than that the more thoroughly we know and nicely interact with the Creator's action, the order of which is termed "natural law," the greater good and the greater progress in all that is good do we realize. Not only does this corroborate the fact of divine benevolence, but evinces that harmony with the divine action is the true use, and antagonism to that action is the abuse, of both ourselves and our environment—evinces that use is the law of welfare, or good, and that our miseries are born of abuse.

Whether we regard man as a fresh creation when he appeared, as represented, in Eden, or as a gradually evolved moral being prior to such appearance, the picture of Edenic loveliness seems an appropriate environment to his unsullied state; seems so as an exhibition of love's creative harmonies. By so much, also, when he is fallen, does an unsubdued and riotous natural world seem an appropriate arena which may discipline him into a true use of himself by his effort to subdue it to his service. More accurately stated, the hardships of his natural environment result from his false adjustment to it by his abuses; and, by their corrective tendency, they reprove

these abuses and suggest his reformation to progressive development as the remedy for these hardships. The ground, "cursed for his sake"—that is, cursed by reason of his false attitude in relation to it—yet vital with the activities of love's creative energies, invites man to return to the true use of himself that he may recover his environment to right adjustment and Edenic loveliness. But while man clings to the abuses incident to selfishness the whole creation must continue to "groan and travail in pain, awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God."

*The historical realization of selfishness* illustrates its genesis and effect as a *disturbance* in the evolution of love. It is equally clear that such disturbance or disordering of originally good elements cannot have taken place except as the chosen act of finite persons. A person who thus falsely adjusts himself disturbs the original harmony of being. He is a perverter who puts a false meaning into his relations to God and toward his fellow beings. He assigns them the false character of enemies or servants, and abuses their action toward himself. He is a "false accuser," and the person who first chose to be the perverter of good may well be termed, by bad pre-eminence, *the Devil*.

Much skeptical ado has been made in ridicule of the fact of a personal Devil, but this only raises the suspicion that these skeptics have never thought far enough into the question to discern that *they must either accept this fact or hold to the doctrine that evil is an "eternal principle,"* that is to say, *that evil is a quality of the Independent Being*—hold to the eternal coexistence of evil with good, which is a doctrine without rational support, but is one of the crude superstitions of dualism. If, of these two qualities, only good is from eternity, then evil has originated as a perversion of good elements; and if so, this per-

version is the act of a person or persons; and the first of these persons, thus guilty, may be styled the Devil, or "false accuser," with entire propriety. But, name him what we will, his personal identity and agency must be admitted as a logical necessity.

Moreover, the first of sinners may with equal propriety be referred to as in a *representative* capacity; and the whole course of evil which has succeeded his initial perversion of good may be, in this sense, termed the "works of the Devil," without for a moment supposing him to personally inhabit this planet. This last is an entirely different question, and has no significance in this discussion.

To sum up at this point: Perfection of personal being consists in freedom from conditions; hence, God alone is absolutely perfect. Dependent persons must always be dependent for their existence, but may become perfect within the conditions which this dependence implies. The entire evolution of love affords conditions to the progressive development of dependent persons. Hence, their right adjustment to these conditions is in using them for progress toward their perfection. The progress of developing personality from the most limited personal consciousness consists of the mastery of limiting conditions, and throwing them off as they are transcended by progressive self-determination. All conditions to progress incite to progressive determination by affording *motivity* thereto. In the term "motivity" we include both objective incitements and the inner susceptibility which may be awakened, exercised, and satisfied by objective incitements. When personal determination progresses beyond the need of any specific class of conditions the incitements of that class should be dismissed from personal motivity. The child who is old enough to appreciate a drum or a

gun, yet clings to his rattlebox, is suspected of idiocy. Or a man who is sane enough to distinguish excellence of character from physical pleasure, yet continues supremely devoted to the latter, is convicted, not of idiocy, but of moral depravity. Hence, experienced progress teaches self-love that these temporary conditions are but means to higher self-development—stepping-stones to the higher and wider conditions of a nobler personality.

But such may have been the interest, the enjoyment, of these outgrown conditions as to make them still alluring objects, and such may be the hardship of new and higher conditions as to render them, in themselves, uninviting—only desirable for the better self-development to be attained by using them. The charm of progress toward a better life, devotion to perfection of being, a better self, is the only motivity that can be depended upon in such a crisis. Faith and love, in some form or other, can alone afford motivity by which the soul may transcend this besetment. But to continue in the exercise and satisfaction of those means which have fulfilled their use is to make the enjoyment incident to them the object of self-determination. Self-determination chooses not to progress beyond them; and the actual self now attained is the object to which self-determination is now devoted. The ideal, or better, self is ignored, rejected. Perfection of being and companionship with the perfect are set at naught. Self-love now chooses its good in whatever may gratify this actual, but imperfect, self. It is no longer devotion to the perfection of self, to the realization of an ideal self, but is devoted to the attained, actual self. *This is selfishness; and this, in a progressive personality, is violation of his being, the essence of sin.* Thus the normally innocent susceptibility to lower motives is made an object of supreme devotement, is excessively exercised

and gratified, and thereby rendered overgrown, morbid, and vicious. It becomes the lap of Delilah in which personal self-determination, the giant, dallies until shorn of devotion to an ideal life, and bound by degrading limitations. The susceptibilities to higher motives are unawakened, or if awakened in any degree they are rejected, violated, and ultimately abolished. Thus the good elements in progressive being are disordered, the true relations to other persons and to divine love are perverted, and the right adjustment of life is lost.

In a word: Self-love in progressive self-determination, seeking the realization of an ideal self, is right and pure. But it may become perverted into devotion to an actually attained, but imperfect, self. This is a depraved devotement or a depraved unholy self-love which (1) renders the actual, lower, or imperfect self morbid by exaggerated importance and the gratification, exercise, and undue development of the lower feelings; making them the end, or object, of self-determination. (2) It thus perverts these means from their rightful use as conditions upon which to develop higher conditions to a higher self-determination. This is to say, perverted self-love corrupts the actual self, and disorders the rightful relations of self toward God and the world. This is the genesis of evil in a person, or a world, originally good.

Thus self-love is the pivotal fact upon which personal harmony is adjusted, for the highest good; and the perversion of this pivotal fact, from devotion to *self-perfection* to devotion to *actual self*, is the genesis of evil.

*This perverted self-love is selfishness.* Sin and selfishness are different names for the act of rejecting the *ideal self*, which I ought to become, and substituting the *actual self*, which I am, as the object of self-devotement. It is the apotheosis of self, the "coveteousness which is idol-

atry." Self usurps the throne of God in the soul. Conscience, the consciousness of the authority of the perfect, condemns this action by imposing the consciousness of self-degradation. It involves the consciousness of offense toward all to whom I stand related. It involves consequent guilt, which is the complement of offense. It is, therefore, the cardinal violation of being and all the relationship of being. The disrupting of true adjustment, it is the introduction of strife, the antagonist of all good by displacing good with evil. It is radical contempt for the actual perfection of God and its moral authority, and, hence, the enemy of holiness, benevolence, and truth; and is the corruption of being. Selfishness, sin, is the grand disturbance to the evolution of love, and therefore presents the essential "problem of evil."



## CHAPTER III

### THE SOLUTION OF EVIL

I beseech Thee, show me thy glory.—*Moses.*

“THE problem of evil,” in its second phase, is the question, How does love, in its evolution, attain the perfect determination of altruism—perfect benevolence—notwithstanding evil? Or, to state it in another way, What course must the evolution of love be thought to take in view of the rise of either error or selfishness, or both?

What has gone before exhibits the divine being as perfect, the human being as progressive, and love as the nature of the action which determines the perfection of the one and the perfect progressiveness of the other. Divine love determines the perfect being, and conditions the self-determination of progressive beings. And human love, upon these conditions, determines progressive being: progressing toward an ideal personality which, when realized, is, though dependent, the highest type of conditioned being—perfect dependent personality. Love is the infinite force working out the problem of the universe.

Evil in general is the practical obstruction or antagonism to good. It results either from error in carrying out devotion to the ideal, or from intentional lapse from that devotement. In the former case it exists in the person as error, or mistake, and objectively as trespass and misfortune. In the latter case it is a rejection of love and a substituting of selfishness as the mode of self-love. This, subjectively, is infidelity to ideal being, and rebellion against the sacred authority of the perfect. Objectively, it is the disharmony, abuse, and debasement of

all the conditions to which it is related. This latter mode of evil will be considered later.

It is clear that evil is the defeat, for the time being at least, of possible good, in varying degree, at any point in the career of any person or persons. Evil of either form mars, temporarily at least, the otherwise harmonious universe, and retards the development of the highest possible good.

Error must beset a person or a race whose exercise of self-love arises at the lowest stage of intelligence and power at which it is possible. This, indeed, to such a degree as to defeat the benevolence of the Creator, but for two implied considerations. These are, first, the fact that error does not imply a lapse, or break, in the love of the creature for his Creator, or in the devotement of self-love to his own highest ideal. The harmony of interaction with the conditioning action of divine love is unbroken. Error is a matter of misjudgment or unskillfulness, but has no place in the inner intention of love, and does not necessarily induce selfishness. Hence, simple error is mistaken action in detail in the preliminary or supplementary means of a true intention. But it may clash with one's environment of divine or human action and interests. For example, a most loving man, devoted to God and his fellow beings, and striving to be his best self for God and man, may, through error of judgment, practice that which injures his own health and that of his neighbors. Yet in all this his personal devotement to universal good is the same, and his spirit is morally pure and benevolent.

This fact is the foundation for the second relieving consideration, namely: The evil result of his misguided action educates him to a correct judgment; and his undisturbed moral harmony with love prompts him to correct

his practice. Thus mere error, conditioned by love, is corrective in its tendency. It affords, also, the conditions for a more exalted exercise of love in beneficent reparation toward his injured neighbors, and in a nicer future interaction with the divine activities in his own nature and environment.

Moreover, a progressive development which gradually evolves moral freedom at the earliest possible stages of intelligence and power, though it must be most fruitful of error, nevertheless results not only in the least evil possible and is corrective in its tendency, but develops the greatest possible degree of innocent experience of good and ill. Error is thus made to strengthen the person against temptation to *intentional* evil. The highest consciousness of the excellence of right, and of the obnoxious character of wrong in proportion to the harm sustained, is thus acquired by finite persons. A long term of innocent error may so educate finite persons in the goodness of right and the harmfulness of wrong as to secure them forever against liability to intentional wrong.

In a progressive universe error is made, by benevolent conditions, to have a useful mission, but sin has none. Error, rendered self-correcting under the auspices of love, is the true "bitter-sweet" of human life, and is able to eliminate the bitter and perfect the sweet. If, in the history of a vicious race, it must be acknowledged that "there is a force, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness," how much more could the same force, in the history of a race which may ignorantly err, yet is devoted to truth and goodness, maintain essential, and realize universal, harmony! This force is the Creator's love, which, true to the ideal, posits and maintains an ever-present basis of correction, recovery, and harmony to dependent persons in all their errors. The unbroken reign of love

is the element of perfection in a progressive universe. This perfection is not impaired by errors of detail. These do not disturb the reign of love, but can only occasion a change in the line of its development. Hence, the disturbance to superficial harmony which may come about through innocent error is not an essential evil, but may become a good in progressive being.

But there is a class of error which may arise as incident to intentional wrong—as the natural result of thinking from a selfish standpoint. The perversion of self-love to selfishness is a personal misadjustment toward one's entire relationship which must be fruitful of incalculable error and consequent evil. For example, that least malignant form of selfishness termed egotism, or exaggerated self-esteem, leads the person who is afflicted with it into endless absurdities, and often calamitous results to others as well as himself. To plead that these evils were the result of mere mistake will not excuse him in the judgment of his injured fellow men, but they will hold him blameworthy and curse his inordinate self-esteem which betrayed him into these harmful blunders. Thus, but on a much larger scale, inordinate self-love guiltily augments the evil of the world by its unintended incoherencies and errors. Many who have simply intended to gratify an appetite for stimulants have become debauchees or murderers. The informing power of a good heart and the misleading influence of a bad heart are such prominent forces in forming the judgments of men that centuries of human experience have stamped them, severally, as wisdom and folly.

This class of error is that which arises from ignoring God and devotion to perfection of being as the law of universal adjustment. Some of the ablest minds among men have perpetrated the most gigantic and hurtful follies

through selfishness. The effort to possess the largest possible satisfaction to actual self is illustrated in not only the crimes, but the follies, of a Macbeth or a Napoleon, as well as in the "fool" who ignored his soul when he decided to "pull down his barns and build greater." This class of error must be assigned to selfishness, and can only be disposed of along with the solution of the problem of evil.

*The Problem of Moral Evil.*—According to love, all being is sacred. The ideal which is self-conscious in love is *truth*, enacted truth is *righteousness*, intention to enact truth is *holiness*, and the practical satisfaction of love is *the good*.

Selfishness practically ignores all these facts. Ignoring the perfect, independent reality of God, it rejects the authority of the perfect, the ground of moral obligation, the supreme criterion of all action and being. Man, ignoring self-progress toward self-perfection, rejects the authoritative ideal which he should actualize, and thereby rejects the independent perfection which maintains the authority of this ideal. He thus refuses to be the best he might be for himself, for God, and for fellow beings. He rejects companionship with the perfect and thus determines himself in derogation of all others. In this abuse of his being he also abuses the *conditions* of his being. This abuse disturbs the order of the world, and corrupts the conditions of human life in general. It ignores that there is an intrinsic nature, or independent reality, in which are truth, right, holiness, and good; ignores there is anything essentially sacred. Hence the line which distinguishes between good and evil is the question, *Is love perfect action?* Or, on the other hand, can self-love, as the first right of being, determine for itself greater power and pleasure, find a better existence, a higher good in

selfishness? And if not, has it a right nevertheless to choose satisfaction in a self-determination which is derogatory to others? Hence, selfishness is the attempt of the dependent persons to ignore the Independent, the effort of malevolence to disparage benevolence which it appropriates and perverts, and to corrupt the conditions upon which others must needs determine themselves.

Thus the rise of selfishness, moral evil, or sin raises many most difficult questions. Whoever was the first of sinners was the author of one of the most weighty problems known to human thought—a problem upon the theoretic solution of which depends a true philosophy, and upon the practical solution of which depends the success of the personal universe. And every sinner revives the same questions within his own relations to God and the world. Some of these questions we here venture to state:

1. Is there an independent reality?
2. Is love the nature of independent reality, perfect action, and therefore the criterion of all action?
3. Does love realize absolutely perfect being in God, and therefore an authoritative criterion for all being?
4. Is love's ideal, as self-conscious in God, the infinite ideal, absolute truth?
5. Is love, the nature of God, intentionally determined by him, and therefore holy?
6. Is love-determined being capable of the highest possible good, under all circumstances?
7. Is a God whose nature is love the best God that can be?
8. Is the universe, as evolved by love, the best that might be—capable of the greatest power for good in both quality and degree?
9. May not finite persons determine a higher self-love,

greater good power, and pleasure for themselves by selfishness than by supreme love for their Creator and equal love for each other, and to that extent be independent of God?

10. Is love the only kind of action which determines the highest good in any class of conditions; or may we not be satisfied, if we choose, with a life which is indifferent to God, and which may corrupt the conditions of fellow beings; may we not sin and prosper?

These questions suggest how all-comprehending is the issue between a pure self-love which is supreme devotion to perfection of being, and selfishness which is supreme devotion to actual, but imperfect, being. But they all center in this: Is love perfect action, the nature of the absolute, or independent, reality? Or is it but an arbitrary determination which God chooses as the structure of things which he upholds by mere power, and thereby imposes hardship upon all which does not harmonize with this convention? If it is the latter, then the pursuit of truth, holiness, and good on the part of men is nothing better than a wise utilitarianism; and selfishness is nothing worse than a mistake, or a wrong self-determination which one may deliberately choose without blame, provided he accepts its ill results. But if it is the former, the nature of perfect action, then truth, holiness, and real good are intrinsic qualities of being, have an absolute basis which is independent of all relationship, structure, or conventionality. Man's pursuit of them is a matter of progressive companionship with God, as independent, infinite; and man's rejection of them is a matter of essential self-degradation, and guilty violation of the rights of pure self-love in others.

Therefore it appears that the solution of evil must be a question of permanence, or persistence—the persistence

of a personal universe. And this persistence must survive all susceptibility to disharmony and disintegration. If a personal being can exist indefinitely, yet susceptible to evil, it follows that a perfect finite personality or universe can never be attained. Hence, the evolution of a perfect universe by love implies that its grand requisite is to cancel self-love's natural susceptibility to evil, and eliminate all selfishness.

*The issue which evil presents* is, then, one of conflict, antagonism between love and selfishness. The original sin is the displacement of love by selfishness, as the nature of individual self-determination. Hence, what has been termed "the conflict of good and evil" is really the conflict of love and selfishness. It is a rivalry for the supreme determination of personal being. All questions which arise between good and evil, the true and the false, right and wrong, are essentially involved in this. Upon the solution of this issue between love and selfishness depends the perfecting of the personal universe. Hence, the evolution of love implies that this question *must* be met and settled. How will it be accomplished?

*How does the evolution of love condition the perfecting of the personal universe, notwithstanding the rise of moral evil?* The answer to this question is implied in former chapters. What is needed now is to render more explicit here what is implicit there, touching this question. Hence, a considerable repetition of what has been stated may appear in this chapter, though the object is different.

*Motivity*, conditioning self-determination, can and must afford the solution of this question. Elsewhere we have defined motivity as comprehending both subjective susceptibility and objective influence, inciting to a choice of self-determining action. Hence, motivity is the influence which their conditions afford to conditioned persons, and



with reference to which they may freely act, adopting or rejecting them as the ground of their intentions. Thus motivity continually recognizes the moral freedom, or self-determination, of conditioned persons. To render finite persons eventually unsusceptible to selfishness, and finally settle all the beguiling questions which sin has raised, and also to settle them by sin's total loss of objective motivity, through its self-demonstrated failure and turpitude, and by the self-demonstrated persistence and excellence of love, is the grand end to be attained.

We may, therefore, expect the evolution of love to take a course that will condition these two objects, namely, the canceling of all susceptibility to selfishness, and the neutralizing of all objective motivity to evil. We will consider them under the following heads:

I. *Subjective motivity; or, in other words, inner susceptibility.*

II. *Objective motivity; or, outer incentive.*

I. The question plainly recognizes that two things have to be accomplished: first, the perfection of human character, and, secondly, the abolition of evil. The question also implies that the evolution of love cannot solve, but can only condition the solution of moral evil. Since the question at issue is one of personal determination, it leaves to the evolution of divine love to determine nothing other than the conditions upon which dependent persons may determine the perfection of their being and the abolition of all evil. As their self-determination is the determining factor for the universe, it must be held inviolate in this solution.

*Compulsory power* cannot solve this question. It may be asked, Should not the Creator destroy each person who perverts his nature, by withdrawing at least his supporting power, and thus permit that person to lapse from

being, cease to exist? Some, with amazing lack of thought, ask, Why did not God destroy the first sinner, and indeed every sinner, and thus prevent the continuance and accumulation of sin and sorrow? A moment's reflection should suffice to show that such a procedure could never answer to finite minds the questions originated by sin, nor abolish the susceptibility of self-love to selfishness. Indeed, it would be rendered impossible to ever accomplish these cardinal ends. God would appear as maintaining his independence by sheer force; hence, force must appear as the highest manifestation of his nature, must be the ground of moral obligation; and how low such morality would be, maintained by force as chief incentive, is readily seen. Their harmony, personal freedom, and good must then be limited to the degree to which these might be secured by obedience under duress of abject fear. Thus God must appear to conditioned persons as but a dynamic independent, maintaining himself by mere might, never evincing moral perfection or intrinsic excellence of character.

Since no motive higher than fear of force could then appeal to finite persons, they would be incapable of higher than enforced obedience; and thus the determination of a moral universe would be at an end. Moreover, since God had not ventured to meet the question, that selfishness may be more excellent than love, with any other solution than that of interposed strength, this solution would afford consolation, and even prestige, to the condemned; would continue to beset the obedient, encourage the wicked, and threaten the disintegration of the personal universe; would haunt the throne of God evermore.

Who overcomes

By force, hath overcome but half his foe.

*Not upon conditions of justice; limiting the evolution*

of love to the demands of justice! To secure that the existence of finite persons may be simply better than non-existence is merely just; that is to say, this much is requisite to justify the Creator in his having chosen to create dependent beings. But this is not the object of love's evolution, cannot achieve a perfect universe, is not a determination of the degree of good which can be attained by persons of the highest qualities, is not a complete realization of the divine benevolence.

Just conditions imply, of course, the immediate elimination of sin, whether by death or other punishment of the sinner. This must be for the reason that even justice must maintain the conditions to good, and eliminate incitements to evil. But such conditions cannot be maintained if any person or number of persons may practice disharmony and yet be continued in association with the obedient, and enjoy, as well as abuse, their benign conditions. The example of this impunity would constantly tempt others to sin. The fact as well as the appearance of justice would be wholly lost. Their evil action and influence would inflict injury upon innocent individuals, and must corrupt society in general. Thus the conditions to good must be impaired, incitement to evil enhanced, and the least of evil result not secured. This course of things must corrupt the entire race, and defeat all good. Justice has no alternative but to maintain a process of casting out the factors of evil as they arise. It is a necessary implication that dependent persons, conditioned in holiness and benevolence only to the extent of justice, must be crushed immediately upon their practicing or intending evil.

It is true, harmony can thereby be assured; the obedient would have no motive but to continue obedient. Evil would be suppressed, the creative and supportive action

of God would be preserved from perversion or abuse, the creation would stand justified, and the Creator's authority undisturbed. But this would be a universe of fear. Might would appear necessary to sustain right. Mere strength would be the ground of obedience, the basis of motives. It cannot inspire motives of a higher order than dread. Universal selfishness would be the highest type of character. This limited evolution of love cannot be perfectly holy, for the reason that it does not realize the ideal person or universe; nor can it be perfectly benevolent, for the reason that it fails to determine complete altruistic beneficence.

If this just conditioning of dependent persons were the limit of love's evolution, then either of two results must follow: the rise of evil by error or sin must corrupt the universe and defeat love, or else the wrongdoer must be immediately eliminated, crushed out, from its conditioning forces. In either case the question of the possible excellence of selfishness is not met, but remains installed as a powerful enterprise, and has a prestige which discredits the moral authority of love. The continuance and accumulation of evil must degrade the conditions which favor good, and enhance the conditions which favor evil, resulting in the entire displacement of the former by the latter. In a word, there can be no means of preventing the disintegration and defeat of a personal universe upon conditions of justice, except by a process of casting out the factors of selfishness as they arise.

That the Creator has an arbitrary right to create finite beings in conditions of justice, where their defection would be their immediate disaster, and where fear of destruction would be the highest incentive to obedience, is not disputed here. There are, for aught we know,

such orders of being, "servants that do his will," "living creatures" that confess his power, "angels who kept not their first estate"; but, though there are such beings, they are not the highest representatives of a personal universe. They do not know the highest conditions afforded by divine benevolence. They may know his righteousness, realize his justice, but such beings, confined to such conditions, cannot determine an ideal universe. They are not of the highest order of finite personality, not exponents of perfect altruism, not capable of the highest conditionable good.

They are beings whose functions may form conditions to higher orders of beings, as the vegetables and animals of this planet form a portion of the conditions to man's being and development. By observation of higher motives as exemplified in the higher conditions of other orders of being they may learn to share the motives of those higher beings, and so attain, eventually, to the highest personal character. The conditions of human salvation which, perhaps, these "angels desire to look into," may inspire in them similar motives to those which condition man's rise from a position in some respects "a little lower than the angels" to one above them, "crowned with glory and honor." And such orders may be needed to condition the perfection of others and of the universe as a whole. But on the basis of justice alone the highest personality cannot be attained. On justice alone a perfect moral universe cannot be thought. Even if persons were created at the highest point of finite intelligence and power possible, they would nevertheless have no experience of evil, yet would be free to sin. Of the infinite excellence of love they might, indeed, have the widest possible faith incident to the highest finite intuition, but the susceptibility of their self-love to choose their good

in a selfish use of their magnificent powers would still be open before them. Hence, as stated more at length in the chapter "Creation," their security in righteousness is by no means assured. And in the event they choose this selfish course their power for evil would be the greatest possible, and the maximum of ill result must follow. And since their sinning would transpire in the midst of the highest finite intelligence and motivity, their overthrow must be immediate and final. Thus, again, the supreme motive to obedience would be selfish fear.

Incapable of realizing its ideals on conditions of justice, love pushes its evolution into higher and wider modes of benevolence. The rights of justice all must admit. They can condition an evolution of energy, but cannot adequately condition an evolution of love; cannot afford scope within which the divine choice to determine perfect unselfishness, perfect altruism, can be realized. The highest good possible to conditioned being cannot be achieved because the highest self-determination possible to dependent persons cannot be attained while limited to motives of hope and fear. Justice has its place as indicating the rights of dependent and independent beings. It marks the level below which a God of love cannot create nor condition sentient beings, and above which they have no claims upon him. They have no claim upon him for more than is just; but love, in seeking to realize its ideal universe, bestows upon them a degree of good far greater than justice could provide. Dependent persons may demand justice, but not grace, of the independent. They cannot demand, but the Creator can bestow, gracious conditions far above what justice requires; and this he does in evolving the perfect universe. Grace does not violate justice, but transcends it. Justice marks the lowest plane, mercy the highest,

upon which a universe may be projected. Upon the plane of grace God chooses to bestow the good which he realizes there is in being; the good which love is able to condition in a universe of dependent persons who are morally free. The evolution of love is essentially gracious, merciful.

Further: In the question of love's perfection it is clearly its altruistic freedom which is put to trial—not as to the capability of perfect egoism to afford perfect altruism, but as to the susceptibility of free, finite persons to afford it scope for perfect determination. If God visits sinners with forceful compulsion to obedience he thereby confesses inability to condition full, practical determination to altruistic benevolence, and thereby confesses the imperfection of his love-determined creation; and this is to confess that love, his nature, is imperfect. *Hence it is that love cannot resort to force to disclose the intrinsic authority of moral obligation.* God may have the arbitrary right to destroy the rebellious directly upon their sinful act, but the evolution of love is thereby estopped. Love, in sheer self-sufficiency, as independent self-determination, must meet rebellion with further benevolent conditions if it would condition the determination of its perfect altruistic freedom. Let it be steadily held in our thought that an evolution which determines a perfect altruism is one which gives full development to the motive of creation, namely, benevolence in its proposed purpose, the highest good of being. To attain this purpose, it is self-evident that benevolence must have all the scope of limitless altruistic freedom. With equal tenacity let it be remembered that this purpose is the same as a determination of a perfect objective ideal, and that in the love which seeks to realize this ideal is the moral authority, or ground of moral obliga-

tion, in all the objective action of the Creator, and to all finite being. Holiness can be thought only of action which is in accord with ideal perfection; and achievement of ideal perfection alone can fill out the thought of the highest good of being. Hence, benevolence as the motive to the realization of the highest good must be thought as a motive prompted by holiness. God is benevolent as he is holy, and he is holy because his nature is love. Therefore, the holy action of God must always be benevolent. Holiness is, therefore, the law unto benevolence, as the ideal is the law unto the practical. It is clear, then, that the achievement of highest good to finite persons has for its motive a holy benevolence. As benevolence, therefore, is a motive born of that perfect egoism which realizes perfect holiness in God's perfect self-determination, this benevolence, as motive to the determination of an objective universe, must be holy in all universal determination. Divine holiness which is not benevolent, divine benevolence which is not holy, cannot be thought.

But when holy benevolence is misappropriated and abused, made the occasion and interacting abettor of sin by the persons to whom it has given existence, the question is, *What must be the course of divine action that it may realize its holy benevolence in true fidelity to the ideal of a perfect universe?* The ideal of being which is implicit in love's perfect action, whether that action be the self-determination of God or his determination of the universe, must abide as the moral imperative in both egoism and altruism. Any action of God which might impair that moral authority would concede the failure of love and limit its altruistic freedom. Hence, the thought of such action cannot be entertained. It is perfectly clear that holiness, as the law of action which develops benev-



olence, also establishes the rights of benevolence; and, also, that benevolence is not something which has no rights except to submit to abuse. It is equally clear that the benevolent action of God might rightfully cease at any and every point where it is abused by finite persons—might, to conserve moral purity, withdraw, or suspend, its positing and interacting power at the first attempt of any dependent person toward selfish determination. This would be, in legal terms, the limit of justice. But it would also be the failure of a moral universe, the failure of the altruistic freedom of God, the failure of his love as perfect action, for the reason that it thus appears as a benevolence which can survive abuse only by force, and inspire reciprocity only by fear. If the divine ideal of a universe is thus to be limited by arbitrary right, and thus requires the support of force, it is clearly not the realization of ideal conditioned personality; it is not, and cannot become, a perfect universe.

The evolution of love has in it no place for coerced reciprocation. All degradation of being and all suffering which comes by degradation of being must be inflicted by persons other than God. The good of being, the good of every being, is the purpose of creation. From the bosom of love all creative forces steadily pour their energies in the direction of that purpose. Only by man's false self-adjustment, self-perversion, can his real degradation be induced and its sorrows experienced. Destruction of being can be thought to come of persons only by self-infliction. If persons in a love-created universe become incapable of recovery it can only be self-induced. The railroad affords the best facility by which to travel over long distances, but if one adjusts himself falsely to that road by standing or walking before the engine and disputing the right to the road, this admirable railroad action

will override and crush him. But if he board the train the same harmonious and persistent action which would have crushed him, in his false adjustment to it, will prove the greatest facility to his journey.

No! It is evident from the nature of this problem, from the nature of dependent persons, from the nature of God, that force cannot solve the problem of evil. Again, how may it be solved?

*Grace, alone*, can condition the realization of the ideal universe. That is to say, that the ideal which imperatively demands its realization in love's evolution is a universe of persons who shall attain to the highest self-determination; or freedom, possible to dependent beings; that they shall achieve this in harmony with divine love, and shall be able to attain security from danger of discord or defection; and that the practical realization of this ideal is alone capable of the highest conditionable good, which good is the benevolent purpose of love's evolution. Further, it is to say, that this security of free persons can be achieved only by neutralizing all motive to evil, and by affording the highest incitement and susceptibility to good. And all this is to say, that the gracious evolution of love, an evolution beyond the limits of justice, conditions not only the rise, but the remedy, of evil.

Grace is a necessity in the realization of a perfect moral universe. This is not saying that God is under necessity to create a universe, but having chosen to create he imposes upon himself certain necessary conditions, and one of them is mercy, a degree of benevolence beyond the boundary of arbitrary right. It is that degree of benevolence which conditions the maintenance of dependent persons, though such persons are out of harmony with love, by either error or intention.

Since progressive development is the essential mode of attaining ideal conditioned being, and since its lower stages are most liable to error, it is evident that the leniency of grace is a necessity to the evolution of love.

Sin, the intentional perversion of self-love into selfishness, arbitrary right would demand should be estopped by the withdrawal of creative, or sustaining, power from the sinner; thus permitting him to perish. But we have seen that this intervention of force, by whatever mode, cannot meet the questions which sin raises, and the moral necessities it imposes. Such action would end an evolution of love, extinguish a moral universe except in the bare form of choosing between fear and penalty, and would utterly cancel the moral sacredness of truth. Benevolent altruism, the motive to creation, would be defeated. The problem of excellence or nonexcellence of love and selfishness must be worked out upon their merits as rival methods of self-determination. Hence, grace is a necessity as affording scope in which this solution may appear.

Thus a successful evolution of love must be able to condition the moral recuperation of sinners; must demonstrate love's ability to outlive all possible disaster in attaining a perfect universe, and thus yield to all finite persons the consciousness of its perfection in all it implies. Hence, gracious forbearance is a necessary condition to the evolution of love. Mercy, though not a necessity to divine personal perfection, is a necessity to a successful moral universe; a necessity in realizing the highest objective good proposed by infinite benevolence. The infinite pathos of God's mercy has its germ in his benevolence as the primary motive to creation. It is not an afterthought; it is "from the foundation of the world." Since only the gracious benevolence of divine love affords ample

scope in which to condition motivity to the ultimate solution of evil, we come now to consider more explicitly:

*What are the implied processes or forms in which love affords ample motivity to the complete solution of evil?*

Two words comprehend the answer to this question, *Faith* and *Persistence*. By affording the conditions which will lead to faith the evolution of love furnishes to finite persons the form of motivity, by which to cancel self-love's susceptibility to selfishness. Faith—which is subjection of the actual to the ideal—is man's self-determined condition upon which his love—his devotion to an ideal life—arises and determines his perfection. Thus divine love gains scope within which to inspire reciprocal love in man, and to demonstrate its merit to him, and in him, and by him.

But the gracious benevolence of divine love which affords the conditions to faith thereby gives scope also to selfishness in which to demonstrate itself, to modify natural conditions to suit its own ends, and to appropriate the lenience of grace in making full determination of its results—a determination more imposing and more favorable to selfish success than it could make, but for the gracious forbearance and kindly conditions which divine love affords to sinners.

By thus conditioning the thorough self-demonstration of their merit or demerit, their persistence or self-destruction, the objective motivity of love is enhanced, and that of selfishness is abolished. This outcome must establish a universal conviction that love is perfect action, perfectly adjusted life; must establish, also, susceptibility to motives of love, and aversion to selfishness, and thus must settle all disturbing questions and secure universal harmony.

We will be helped, however, in gaining a more explicit

view of this solution by a succinct grouping of the leading points, or stages, in the process :

#### A. THE PROCESS OF FAITH

1. Divine love posits, in nature, or maintains by supernatural intervention, the conditions to faith.

2. Faith cancels the susceptibility to selfishness; and conditions the progressive determination of dependent persons by conditioning hope and love in them.

3. The complete development of their faith, exercised by love to God, establishes in them the highest finite experience of personal freedom, harmony, and security; and establishes in their self-love entire susceptibility to the motivity (incitement) of the ideal self, the ideal universe, and the moral authority of the perfect in divine love; that is, susceptibility to love and aversion to selfishness.

4. These self-determined qualities, harmony, largest freedom, and security, are the essential conditions to the achievement of the highest finite good.

#### B. THE PROCESS OF PERSISTENCE

1. The determination of human love, upon the basis of faith, eliminates evil (1) by repentance of evil intention; (2) by the corrective discipline of ill results.

2. The opposite, or selfish, determination eliminates uncorrected evil by self-defeat.

3. The result of this process, confirming faith by demonstrating the progress and persistence of love as perfect self-determining action, and demonstrating the futility and turpitude of selfishness, settles all the questions which sin had raised and abolishes all objective incentives to evil.

The importance of these forms of motivity, however, demands a fuller elaboration of this scheme :

## THE PROCESS OF FAITH

I. The natural conditions in which man is placed by his Creator render him conscious of certain always-conditioning facts: being, dependence, self-love, reason, conscience, and self-determination, or will. These constitute the abiding conditions upon which faith arises and is maintained. The first three give rise to the impulse or demand for progressive development, the last three construe what that development should be and the manner of realizing it. Upon the facts being and dependence reason unavoidably recognizes the independent; and in the independent readily recognizes the infinite, the perfect, the absolute. To self-love, with its love of being and desire for highest good, conscience promptly unites the demand to be one's best self. This prompting to be one's best self, a demand which is spontaneous in all mankind, gives rise naturally to the question, What is the ideal, or perfect, life? And whatever anyone may judge to be the best, the true life for him, under his circumstances, is the ideal which conscience insists he ought to actualize. This moral authority which conscience gives to the ideal of life is wholly inexplicable, except as the independent sentiment of a perfect being—the sentiment of that independent force which posits our nature. This ideal of life, or ideal self, is not an object of perception and need not be rationally defined, but the demand for it is felt in the sense of dependence and self-love, its moral authority as a criterion for actual life is felt in conscience, reason grasps it as an implication of the independent, and self-determination seeks to actualize it. In a word, these facts impose the conviction that present being has its only significance and satisfaction in becoming. "Man never is [fully], but always to be blest." Acting upon this conviction is adjusting the existing self

as a becoming self, seeking perfect selfhood. And this is only saying that it is acting upon the facts which consciously condition our being. This is living, active, practical, natural faith, "the subservience of the actual to the ideal," of the present to the becoming, the imperfect to the perfect, the dependent to the independent. It arises naturally upon natural conditions; and must arise just as naturally when the same conditioning facts are revealed to the human consciousness by supernatural methods. Thus appears the first step in "the process of faith"; Divine love posits, in nature, or maintains by supernatural intervention, the conditions to faith.

2. Faith cancels the susceptibility of self-love to selfishness; and conditions progressive self-determination of dependent persons by conditioning hope and love in them.

The susceptibility of self-love to be beguiled into selfishness is *the weak point*, so to speak, of the personal universe, as it is of the individual person. This for the reasons that they are (1) self-determining; (2) their steadfast harmony must be progressively self-determined; (3) this progress must be incited by desire or affection; (4) desires and affections are susceptible to abuse by excess or neglect. A pure self-love, with but finite knowledge, may be lured by the gratification of one class of desires or affections to the neglect of others which, if not neglected, would incite to further progress. Thus, devoted to the satisfaction of an imperfect self, self-love sinks into selfishness. Thus self-love, conditioned by incitements to progressively actualize an ideal self, is liable to choose satisfaction in the actual enjoyment of those incitements and discard the ideal. To fortify this weak point in self-love is a work which only each person can do for himself. *To do this is to accomplish security by abolishing all personal susceptibility to selfishness;*

and thus a person or a universe may become secure in the steadfast harmony of love.

There are but two possible conceptions in which a free being can be thought securely unsusceptible to evil. One is that of his omniscience—a perfect knowledge of the infinite excellence of love and the nonexcellence of selfishness. But this conception can apply to only an infinite person; it is impossible to created beings. The other conception is that of self-love rendered unsusceptible to selfishness *by subjecting actual self to the progressive realization of an ideal life*. Since the susceptibility of self-love to selfishness lies in satisfaction with attained good of the actual self, faith cancels this susceptibility *by subjecting the actual self and holding it subservient to the progressive realization of the ideal, better self*.

Thus faith, by subjecting the actual to the ideal self, places self in the attitude of expectancy. This attitude is hope, an attitude essential to progress. And when by faith's action this attitude is secured the opportunity has come for that self-determining action which naturally arises and seeks to realize the ideal self. This self-determining action is that devotement to the ideal self which is termed self-love. And further, when self-love brings the actual self up to the standard of life which the ideal self indicates, the resulting enlargement and enrichment of the actual self grasps a yet better ideal self. Thus in progressive persons the ideal keeps ever in advance of the actual man. As the poet has it, "The ideal, stable type of ever-moving progress."

The authority which conscience gives to the ideal self is that which the self-realized perfection of God gives to ideal perfection over the actual in all imperfect persons. Hence, faith in God is that active faith which subjects the actual to the ideal in all imperfect but progressive



persons. And living worship and service of God, by me, enacts that faith which renounces the self that I am in order to attain the self which the ideal indicates and conscience insists I ought to become. Thus progressive realization is accomplished by supreme devotement to God, as the perfect person, and devotement to finite persons, as entitled to rights and interests of self-love in common with ourselves.

Faith risks the rights and interests of self-love upon its essential identity with love, trusting that in loving God and fellow men one will attain that ideal selfhood which pure self-love seeks. Faith thus gives an outlook to hope, and affords scope for the exercise of the largest conditioned self-determination. Theoretically, this faith contains the conception that (1) love, as the nature of God, is actual perfection, or perfect action, conscious of absolute truth and perfect good; (2) dependent being exists in accordance with truth and good; (3) human love toward God realizes essential harmony with absolute truth, and will achieve the highest conditioned good; (4) the highest interests of self-love will eventually fall in with supreme love to God and love toward fellow men.

When we say that "the purpose in the creation is to realize the greatest conditioned good," it is said on the ground that love determines perfect benevolence by seeking to realize the highest ideal universe; and that this ideal, when realized, will be the greatest possible conditioned good, a perfect universe. All this is held on the ground that love is perfect action, conscious of the infinite ideal and of the ideal universe, and, hence, the unit in which are absolute truth and perfect good; and on the ground that the highest good, conditioned or unconditioned, is love's realization of its ideal.

The belief that what is true is essentially good, and what is good is essentially true, is in the last generalization the belief that absolute truth and perfect good subsist in the nature of the one perfect being. And since love is the nature of perfect being it is the ultimate unit in which are absolute truth and perfect good. Hence, the highest generalization is implied in "faith in God."

But the rise of selfishness questions this unity of highest beneficence and perfect truth in love. It regards truth as an arbitrary structure to be accepted only as it may be indicated by experienced utility; and utility is estimated accordingly as it satisfies the present, actual self. Thus selfishness is based upon unfaith, or unbelief in the authority of the ideal and all it implies.

On the other hand, love, in the form of human devotion to God, or of love to fellow men, or of pure self-love, implies the subjection of present, actual self, with all its utilities, as being but a point of departure for progress toward finite perfection. And this perfection need not be perceived nor comprehended in advance, as a matter of knowledge, but believed to inhere in love; and that it will be evolved by the harmonious interaction of human love with the all-conditioning love of God. Hence, that action which man takes, by which he subjects his actual self and all present interests and utilities to love of God and fellow men, is actual, or living, faith.

Practically, then, faith is man's complete self-subjection to God; and it consciously contains (1) entire dependence upon God for the conditions of highest well-being; (2) entire freedom in practically recognizing, acting upon, this dependence; (3) security, in moral strength derived from purity of intention, alliance with the independent, and acting from infinite motives.

Hope arises spontaneously upon these contents of faith.

Accurately speaking; hope is the attitude, eager and expectant, which the soul is placed in by living faith. It is an attitude facing forward, toward self-perfection; and its sentiment is, Progress. The subjection of the actual man to the realization of an ideal manhood kindles the aspirations for progress. Maintaining faith, which constantly thus subjects the actual to the ideal, he can say at any stage of his experience, "One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal." In the experience of faith and hope progress is righteousness, harmony, freedom, and security. Unbelief is fossilization in my present imperfection, and this fossilization is sin.

Love to God arises immediately and spontaneously when man's sense of dependence and his free self-subjection to the ideal are complete. It is supreme devotion to God as an absolutely perfect person—perfectly holy, true, and benevolent. This supreme devotement is the outcome of faith's adjustment of those conditions which the Creator's love originally affords for his interaction with dependent persons. It is an adjustment which subjects the intentions of man to the moral authority of the perfect as expressed in conscience.

*Practical faith* which thus works out in love takes for granted that God is a perfect being; perfect because love is his nature. This is not logically defined in faith but is its spirit, the concrete sentiment of its action. Yet the truth thus premised is not gratuitously assumed by dependent persons, but is consciously recognized by them as imposed by the six great facts which, as we have seen, permanently condition their lives—the facts which impose the conviction that our present being has its only meaning and real satisfaction in becoming. Faith takes

this great truth in somewhat the same way as the "law of gravitation" is taken as an *hypothesis* by which to account for existing phenomena, and also as a law by which to construct sciences and apply scientific conceptions to the projectment of practical affairs. So the man of faith acts upon the hypothesis that *God is a perfect being and that his perfect nature is love*; and with this as the law or ground of moral authority proceeds to subject the actual man and his actual environment to conformity with his ideal, or best conception, of what manner of man and what manner of use of his environment are in harmony with the nature and will of a God of love. This is the concrete sentiment of faith in all its action, even though it may not wait for a logical defining of its hypothesis.

Yet the truth which is thus used as an hypothesis is, as stated above, not gratuitously assumed by our man of faith, but is consciously recognized by him as imposed, forced upon him, by the six great facts which permanently condition his inner life—the facts which impose the conviction that our present being has its only satisfactory meaning in becoming.

By saying this truth which is the hypothesis of faith is *imposed* we mean that it cannot be gotten rid of. Reason has it on its hands, nor can be quit of it, except by self-surrender to that heart-foolishness which says there is no God. Let us, therefore, see again what these facts are which thus imperiously impose upon reason the great truth, "God is perfect being." They are being, dependence, self-love; reason, conscience, and will. The first three originate the *demand* for progress, the latter three direct the *form* and *method* of that progress. Being enables me to say, I am. Dependence makes me say, I am dependent upon an independent being. Self-love

demands, Though I am dependent I have the inalienable right to make the best of myself. To these reason adds its recognition of the independent person, infinite, perfect. Reason also recognizes that finite persons are progressive in their nature, and that their best realization of self-love is by progressive development in harmony with their conception of the perfect person. Conscience, the fifth of these facts, contributes to this conception of perfect personality the sentiment, or feeling, of his supreme moral authority. Recognizing that he is not only perfect, but is intentionally perfect, reason sees that he is holy, and that his perfection is not merely an exhibition of his power to be perfect, but has the infinite sacredness of an intentional and supremely devoted perfection. This is felt in conscience as well as recognized by reason and enters into our conception of the independent person upon whom we are dependent. The will, or power of self-determination, completes this list of qualities which cannot be set aside, and which imposes the conviction upon us that "God is perfect being," and that the success of self-love in seeking the best of ourselves is to interact with him, in the sense in which dependent persons may interact with the Independent, and be conformed to him. Faith, like the flame which shows in the spectrum what materials produce it, implies and exercises all of these six facts as the vital data from which it spontaneously arises. Hence, it is clear that the basis upon which faith arises is not a merely assumed hypothesis, but a body of unescapable truth, the practical application of which faith simply enacts by subjecting the actual to the best conception, or ideal, which this body of truth affords. Hence, we define faith as that action of the soul which subjects the actual self to the ideal, or best conception of, self.

Moreover, the hypothesis of faith is demonstrable, in the sense in which the law of gravitation is demonstrated by the successful construction of extensive buildings and mechanism depending upon this law. One of the first demonstrations of faith is that which is experienced by finite persons who conform their becoming to the divine nature, and realize the success of their faith in moral recovery from guilty self-condemnation and selfishness to the spirit and practice of love toward God and man. This power of a new life in the individual, and the power of religious faith, in history, are results which demonstrate the validity of faith as the hypothesis on which they are produced. The consciousness of harmony between conscience and passion, harmony among a community of persons thus faithful, and harmony of dependent with independent, progressive with perfect, consciousness of awakened susceptibility to the intrinsic motives which inhere in the nature of the independent—such as holiness, truth, and good—consciousness of enlarged freedom, exalted self-determination, and increased moral strength, are practical developments of this demonstration.

Faith thus conditions actual progress from the present to a better self—the conscious passing from selfishness to love, from guilt to purity; progress in actualizing an ever-advancing ideal self; progress in appropriating gracious conditions, as a tree appropriates the resources of the soil; and progress in knowledge of the truth, as the tree extends its branches and unfolds its leaves to breathe a higher and wider atmosphere.

3. The complete development of their faith, exercised by love, establishes in progressive persons the highest finite experience of personal freedom, harmony, and security; and establishes in their self-love entire susceptibility to the incentives of the ideal self, the ideal universe,

and the moral authority of the perfect in divine love; that is, susceptibility to love and aversion to selfishness.

In this life of faith which is elaborated by love, a life which is elaborated upon the highest and widest generalization, personal character is not trammled by mechanism nor restricted to the narrow limits of perceived facts, but has the scope of all the implied facts of being and love. Devoted to the realization of an uncomprehended ideal self it lays hold of the infinite motives which are implied in the limitless benevolence and the moral authority of the all-conditioning One. Whether these data of faith are presented to the human consciousness by natural or supernatural methods, they constitute the broad platform upon which human love determines the largest finite freedom and highest harmony. By habitual faith, confirmed, steadfast, inwrought by devotion to God in the midst of temptation, self-denial, and duty, human beings obliterate, cancel permanently, all susceptibility to selfishness, *and thus determine their security*. Moreover, this security is buttressed by the intensely developed susceptibility to all motives of love and fixed aversion to selfishness. These results are attained in the process of faith's demonstration of love's perfection and the turpitude of selfishness. *Susceptibility to love and aversion to selfishness are the lines of eternal fortification to the security of free finite beings*; and these are established by that progress which faith conditions, hope desires and expects, and love determines.

Thus it appears that the freedom, harmony, and security of finite persons are all implicit in the steadfast faith of even the least of those who trust in God. It is not a philosophy, nor a culture, though it affords both the largest philosophy and highest culture, but it is the enactment of a concrete sentiment which is inspired by

the facts which God's conditioning love discloses to the human consciousness. It is the enactment of a concrete sentiment which adjusts the actual self to the ideal as the essential condition upon which to realize that ideal. It is the consciously free self-subjection, or self-adjustment, of the determining dependent to the conditioning independent being. It is the arena of proof in which finite action gains assurance of infinite implications. Hence, all the questions which sin raises are settled by the progressive development of personal harmony, freedom, and security upon the conditions of faith. Hence, it is in faith, that the solution of evil is found.

4. These self-determined qualities, harmony, freedom, and security, are the essential conditions to the achievement of the highest finite good.

We have seen in a former chapter that the benevolence of love implies that the divine object, or purpose, in creation is the greatest good in kind and degree possible to conditioned beings. What are the forms in which that purpose is to be ultimately realized we have not presumed to say. But in whatever form or forms or in whatever degree this object is ultimately developed love implies that it is wholly beneficent, and that it is the highest conditionable good. This is merely saying that the highest good, conditioned or unconditioned, is the practical realization of love.

We have seen, also, that this highest good can never be realized except as the product of a universe which is perfect in certain characteristics, or qualities; a universe consisting of finite persons whose qualities, or character, are incident to their perfect interaction with that divine action which affords the conditions of their existence. It is utter folly to suppose that the greatest possible good may be achieved by factors who are imperfect in quality



and imperfect in their interaction. Hence, we have seen that the supreme good, unalloyed in kind and limitless in degree, is utterly unattainable by finite persons until their qualitative perfection is attained. The realization of the good, then, is conditioned upon the quality of persons who are disembarassed of all disharmony, all unnecessary limitation, and all susceptibility to defection by selfishness. The thinkable degree of good which is possible to the highest thinkable finite person or persons cannot be thought attainable except on these qualitative conditions. Hence, we reaffirm that the supreme good of the universe must be conditioned upon the perfection which love realizes in God, and the perfected quality, or character, of the persons who compose the universe. The essential characteristics of finite perfection, we have seen, are (1) the largest finite consciousness of freedom, (2) perfect harmony in this freedom, and (3) perfect security in this harmony. *These, then, are the qualitative perfections which are the essential conditions to the supreme good of the universe.*

We have seen, also, that these qualities of free beings must be achieved by their canceling all susceptibility to selfishness. We have seen, too, that not only freedom and harmony, but security, by canceling this susceptibility, is determined by these persons themselves. In a word, the conditions to the highest good cannot be attained except in the self-determined character of God's creatures. Hence, it is clear that to determine their largest freedom, complete harmony, and steadfast security is the only method by which the highest good can be attained.

It has been made clear, also, that these qualitative conditions are determined in each person by perfecting his love to God, his pure self-love, and his love to his fellow

beings; in other words, by his devotion to a perfect God, to the realization of a perfect self, and to the perfecting of all others—the perfect companionship.

Thus it appears that these characteristics—*freedom, harmony, security*—which each conditioned person may determine in himself, are the matured conditions upon which such persons may be living factors, interacting with God, to achieve the grand purpose of the universe. They are a set of conditions which God could not create. Even if he could create dependent persons in the highest harmony and freedom, yet he could not create them secure in that harmony and freedom, unsusceptible to beguilement—unsusceptible to beguilement in the use of those affections and powers which are essential to instigate their development of highest finite personality. These qualitative perfections of finite persons, which they must determine in themselves upon the conditions which God places in and about them, enable them, interacting with God, to achieve the purpose of creation, unmarred by any suspicion of selfishness, unalloyed with evil.

Moreover, these self-determined perfections which are the essential conditions to the supreme conditioned good *are attainable by persons of the least intelligence* who act upon faith in God. And thus is established among men, though weak and ignorant, that practical character which is possible only upon the ground that love is the nature of perfect being and that the realization of its ideals is the highest good. To establish this practical character establishes, also, perfect *subjective motivity* to all good and aversion to all evil in all the faithful. *And thus is established among men the nucleus of a self-determined universe, free, harmonious, secure, and eternal.*

II. *Objective motivity*, or external incentive, is to be understood as comprehending every influence which may

appeal, as an object of either desire or aversion, to the inner susceptibility. As the subjective motivity is perfected by the canceling of all susceptibility to selfishness by the process of faith, so also is the objective motivity to love completed by the persistence of love and the failure of selfishness. This persistence is in two principal forms—the persistent conditioning process of divine love, and the persistent determination of human love—both evincing perpetual personal life and altruism.

*Persistence*, the true “survival of the fittest,” the conquest which excellence of quality wins over mere energy, is the test of perfect action; hence, a test of personal excellence. It is a question between love and selfishness upon which their claims to excellence must be demonstrated. If the nature of perfect action is love, a mode of self-determination capable of perpetual personality, eternal life, then love will persist. If selfishness is capable of persistent and progressive personality it must continue evermore.

But personality is self-determining freedom; hence, the question of persistence depends upon the power to maintain or extend the scope of personal determination. If love were a mode of personal action which would increase its limitations and diminish the scope of its freedom, that is, if it would narrow the scope of its self-determining power, it would only be a question of time when, in the exercise of love, personality would be wholly sunken and lost. If, on the other hand, it throws off limitations, obtains mastery of conditions, makes use of them to rise to higher conditions, and survives their use, it thus not only maintains, but enlarges, its sphere of self-determination and *enacts a persistent personality*. So, also, if selfishness, as a mode of self-determination antagonistic to love, increases personal limitations, that is, diminishes

the scope of personal freedom, it is only a question of time when, by selfishness, personal freedom will be wholly lost. And, on the contrary, if selfishness can determine a perpetual personal freedom it must continue evermore. Hence, it is plain, the excellence of personal being consists not in pleasure, but in exalted personality, higher and wider freedom, self-determined persistence. *This is the supreme good.* It is found in that mode of action which realizes persistent personal development in companionship with the immortals.

*The exponents* which indicate the *degree* of one's personal self-determination are personal persistence and altruistic freedom. In God, love affords *perfect* altruistic freedom because of its being the divine nature which realizes perfect egoism. And love subjects itself to an exhaustive test of this freedom in the creating and upholding of a universe of persons who are free to antagonize and pervert its action. It maintains the conditions of their existence, freedom, and progressive development. And nothing but their own free determination can impair these conditions or debase their own personality. And if the benevolence of the Creator endures, uncorrupted and unimpaired, any strain which the freedom of the people of the universe can impose upon it these people thereby demonstrate the perfect altruistic freedom of divine love. Thus the *universe becomes conscious* of the fact that love is perfect action.

Love, by creating a personal universe, professes to be the nature of independent being, perfect action, infinite energy perfectly adjusted, which is infinite, perfect personality; and by creating a universe of persons permits them to demonstrate to themselves this perfection. When love is thus universally demonstrated to be perfect action, perfect being, wholly and infinitely excellent and benefi-

cent, its moral authority (that is, the authority that demands that all action of all persons shall conform to love) will be settled forever, and no motive against it can exist.

Moreover, for persons who shall by means of loving devotion to others promote a progressive personality in themselves, this altruism, this devotement to others is the exponent of their personal excellence. And the *degree* to which they are capable of devotion to the welfare of others is the *measure* of their personal greatness. Thus each person has in himself the means by which to demonstrate the persistent and progressive quality of a loving self-determination. He, therefore, demonstrates for himself that love has in it eternal life.

On the other hand, selfishness says: "Live for your own pleasure and ambition. Use your strength of body and brain to subdue others and appropriate their rights and service." Self-satisfaction is the criterion of personal excellence which selfishness affords. Each person possesses the conditions upon which he may prove his personal exaltation or degradation in the degree he is capable of altruistic devotement. If he must lay under contribution the rights and resources of others to maintain his satisfaction, secure his good, he is to that extent dependent, personally limited. Though he have the material and intellectual might of a Cæsar or Antony, or the splendor and admiration of a Cleopatra, and yet require them all to satisfy his passion for pleasure or power, he simply evinces that all his resources are absorbed by his lowest and narrowest subjective wants. Selfish egoism is an ever-hungering, but unsatisfied, self-limitation.

*The first cardinal point of love's persistence*, in successfully fortifying the weakest point in finite persons, is in

this security gained by canceling self-love's susceptibility to selfishness.

The point now to be noted is *the disposition to be made of the evil which has resulted* to human nature by selfishness, and the evils of human environment in the form of perverted social, civic, and religious conditions; evils which have been developed through the physical, mental, and moral perversions which have arisen from selfishness. Centuries of abuse have given apparently permanent hold to these evils and made them the hereditary lot of mankind. They have the seeming, at least, of persistent forces; and many have been led to regard them as a part of the essential structure of human nature. But their permanence is only apparent, not essential. The fact that faith, working by love, is practicable with all human beings, with the crudest as well as the cultured, evinces that personal determination, upon the conditions of grace, can uproot them all. Hence—

#### THE PROCESS OF PERSISTENCE

1. The determination of human love, upon the basis of faith, eliminates evil (1) by repentance of evil intention; (2) by the corrective discipline of ill results. This is to say, that essential harmony maintained or restored by repentance persists in its ability to correct all ill results of either error or sin; just as truly adjusted machinery wears away and corrects all superficial roughness or inequalities.

A universe evolved by love can neutralize, make away with, or turn to account all mere inaccuracies. (1) Of wrong actions all are of the nature of mere inaccuracy except bad intentions. These alone constitute self-determining action. Therefore, in a universe of persons, ultimate harmony depends on harmony of intentions alone. A

sin once committed can never be recalled; it is an enacted reality existing now independent of the will or wish of the perpetrator. But since the intention in sin may be recalled, repented, confessed, renounced, the original harmony of pure intention between God and the sinner may be restored; and this personal harmony will ultimately correct the ill effect which the sinner may have otherwise sustained. Hence, upon repentance of intention, faith affords personal readjustment and reparation, in the sense of forgiveness and moral recuperation, to the sinner. (2) The objective evil effects of their former sinful actions fall into the category of inaccuracies, errors, or superficial maladjustments. These are transcended by reparation or by being otherwise turned to account as means of corrective chastisement and discipline, or in mutual neutralization and self-defeat. They have become a part of the general environment, in which they ultimately neutralize each other.

Physical death, the culmination of these ills in a change of environment, ends them for individuals. The corrective and disciplinary *tendency* which love-given conditions, natural and supernatural, impose upon error and sin provides all persons with means of personal recuperation. The overmastering for good which love's world-sustaining activities give to all objective results of finite action are but "that force not ourselves" which, as history witnesses, "makes for righteousness." Man's personal determination in faith and love, coöperating with divine love in and around him, thus persists, not only as against the evil results of former abuses, but as counteracting, neutralizing, and outliving them.

Again, if alongside of selfishness and in spite of its obstructions love is able to demonstrate its merits as a mode of self-determination it will successfully condition

the mastery of limitations, and enlarge the scope of self-determination for individuals and communities who accept it, giving real progress. If it afford them, each and all, an altruistic self-love; if it advance them to clearer knowledge of truth and wider dominance of pure intention; if it give them increasing susceptibility to unselfish motives, and aspirations to perfect personal character; if, in a word, it enable them to "partake of the divine nature," which is supreme devotion to perfection of being, then human self-love becomes like that of God, unsusceptible to selfishness, averse to all evil, and morally incapable of questioning the infinite merit of love or the entire demerit of sin.

Further, if love can accomplish this demonstration, notwithstanding the utmost antagonism of sin, notwithstanding the strain, so to speak, which the free course of selfishness has put upon it, then love becomes self-conscious in the universe as the nature of independence; proves itself to be perfect action in *conditioned being* by its self-sustained persistence.

With this universal consciousness that love is perfect action will appear, also, that its ideal is absolute truth, that this truth is the ground of moral obligation, that ethical being, personality, is the highest mode of existence, that a universe evolved by love is the perfect universe, and that God is the unconditioned, infinite, perfect Person, who alone exists in his own right, and by whose grace, only, all finite beings exist—and, hence, to whom is due, by infinite obligation, the supreme love and confidence of all dependent persons.

2. The opposite, or selfish, determination eliminates uncorrected evil by self-defeat and self-limitation. This is to say, that uncorrected selfishness and its corruption of conditions *render those conditions retributive*.



*Retribution* is a change of conditions which results to conditioned persons either as reward or punishment, according as they determine. We have already recognized that justice is the lowest plane upon which love can be thought to condition the existence of persons. Hence, when individuals or communities, by selfish determination, debase themselves and the general gracious environment beneath all susceptibility to recovery, and assure like debasement to all sincere persons who may appear among them—children and youth, for example—justice, the lowest form of love, must eliminate them from conditioning forces. When they render themselves unsusceptible to love, are morally incapable of faith or reform, love cannot permit them to condition the ruin of persons who, in these conditions, cannot but be overwhelmed. Furthermore, in this incorrigible character they are no longer objects of gracious recovery, and their continuance in such gracious conditions would indicate imbecility in divine love to maintain itself or sustain the innocent. They are objects of retribution.

Retribution must in some way take place. But this does not necessarily imply that supernatural or miraculous infliction must intervene to punish obdurates. Nor does it imply a suspension or violation of their personal determination. On the contrary, it means that their conditions must change; or, rather, that they have, by self-perversion, wrecked their relations to the faith-conditioning quality of divine love's activities in and around them. And it means that these activities have now become retributive by reason of their perversion and man's false attitude toward them.

Retributive suffering is wholly a matter of abused conditions, whether those conditions are naturally or supernaturally given. All retributive suffering must come

about as *a revolution of conditions*, natural or supernatural; and these revolutions are brought about by dependent persons themselves, in either their individual or collective capacities, or both. The material elements, fire, air, earth, water, though inestimable blessings in their use, are sources of unspeakable danger and calamity in their abuse. A man's attitude in relation to them must decide whether they shall be to him a blessing or a curse. So, also, the most intense conditions to human exaltation which divine love affords, naturally or supernaturally, must be made by man's self-perversion the most intense conditions to retributive disaster. Man may make them the home of peace and good will, or the den of beasts and fiends. In the former case peace, progress, ideal truth, and beauty will be realized by communities and individuals; in the latter they must perish.

We recognize at this point that as the conditions of human life are in three general forms, or classes, men's retributive changes of condition are, correspondingly, three: (a) Race-retribution, (b) social, or community, retribution, (c) individual retribution.

(a) The first class of conditions we term the race-conditions, according to which generations of individual beings have their successive continuance and qualities in common. It is not accurate to say that "man is born an animal," if we use the term "animal" as synonymous with "beast" or "brute." He is born a personal nature. The babe is not a mere animal nature upon which a personal nature may be developed; no more than the tiny egg in the nest, out of which a humming-bird may be developed, is a seed from the honeysuckle. He is born a personal nature upon which self-determination may arise and develop conscious personality. But upon a brute nature, however perfect, a personal self-determina-

tion can never be developed. There is no ground upon which to affirm that any such transition or evolution has ever taken place or may ever be expected to occur. The human race is a race of beings whose natures are conditions to personal self-determination—a race of personal natures. They are naturally animal only in the sense that they exist upon and have some common race conditions.

The abuse of race conditions by any individual must debase those conditions for succeeding members of the race, just to the extent he may have race relationship to them. And if he happens to be the first of a family or tribe, or of the whole human race, his abuse of race conditions must deprave the nature of all his successors, unless there may be some method of amelioration.

This debasing of racial conditions must also corrupt and impair the conditions of personal determination for both individuals and communities. And if, instead of resorting to ameliorating methods, his descendants continue the abuse of their race conditions, this abuse must, if uncorrected, be ultimately self-limiting and self-defeating—in other words, *retributive* by way of physical disorders, and the enfeeblement and death of individuals and communities as racial factors.

*Racial retribution* is developed in various ways, especially in disease, the shortening of the term of physical life, and in physical death. The implication of love at this point is clearly this: If the original adjustment of the race to its divinely appointed nature and environment had been maintained—that is to say, if selfish self-determination had not been adopted by man, thereby abusing and perverting his nature and misadjusting it to his environment in racial respects—*individual development would, ultimately, have transcended all race conditions.*

A change of environment, progressively, would also have been developed by the progress of the race socially. An individual transcendence of race nature, or an exaltation of that nature to higher capabilities and fitness must have resulted from individual progress in interaction with God. And, this interaction with God being a considerable part of man's environment, his progress individually in harmonious interaction with God must have advanced the quality of that environment. Race relations having been used in the determination of higher relations to God, they must, themselves, have been eventually and wholly superseded. To pass to more intimate interaction and communion with Him who is purely a Spirit, and to determine within one's self a quality and degree of love which is free from physical or merely racial conditions, imply a change of environment. This change would correspond to that which physical death brings to "the faithful" in the present perverted conditions of our race nature.

But though a change from physical conditions might have taken place in case of no maladjustment, but because of a personal development from original innocence by which the present bodily conditions should be transcended, yet the further implication remains that death, as we know it, is a catastrophe which has been precipitated by man's abuse of his nature and environment. The individual transcendence, or translation, of members of a sinless race may be thought as a sublimation quite exalting and glorious—quite other than death as we know it—

Stretched in disease's shapes abhorred  
Or mown in battle by the sword.

Such development, it is probable, may sometime obtain in the latest generations of men, when "they shall not

die, but shall all be changed." Such change of individual conditions may be termed translation or exaltation, but not death. Death is a catastrophe, which, though it cannot prevent the passage of faithful persons to higher conditions of companionship with God, is, nevertheless, a horrid illustration of the self-limitation and self-defeat in racial evil. Physical death fastened upon racial conditions, while failing to intercept the persistent personal progress of the faithful, is but self-limitation and self-defeat to the selfish.

This physical catastrophe which results from moral obliquity has, for aught anyone can see, become hereditary because the physical maladjustments, continued and multiplied, have been made hereditary. Nor can anyone affirm that if the human race, or any of its members, shall at any time recover complete readjustment to the Creator's physical activities they may not find immunity from disease and death. A witty scoffer has said, "In a perfect world good health, and not disease, should be catching." And so it may, with perfect adjustment.

To urge that *physical* death is natural, inasmuch as it prevails as a law in the natural relations of plants and animals, is nothing to the purpose, since these have no discoverable object other than to constitute some of the conditions to the development of personal life.

*Death by age or infirmity* is the wearing out of the bodily energies by an attrition which, when in earlier ages it was less, occurred after longer periods than in the more complex and multiplied abuses of later generations.

*That physical calamities*, such as earthquakes, storms, etc., would have taken place, we do not dispute. But it is by no means certain that *dangerous exposure* to these things would ever have occurred had the propagation of

the race and its spread upon the face of the earth proceeded according to the promptings of a righteous adjustment to its environment. Whether the occasion be a Noachian deluge or the physical destruction of a Sodom there is every reason to believe that human exposure to these catastrophes might have been naturally avoided had the locating and pursuits of communities proceeded according to the promptings of a right adjustment of man to his God-given conditions. Nor can it be denied that the appropriating the earth by men righteously might have proceeded in such a way, in all cases, as to find these physical convulsions harmlessly correlated with the progressive preparation of a fit environment for a progressive race.

*Death by want, war, or crime* is avoidable by righteousness, also; would never have taken place but for selfishness; and will cease among men through the persistence of love.

In all this we can see nothing in physical death from either disease, old age, famine, violence, or physical catastrophe which evinces that it is anything other than a *change of environment* hastened and rendered appalling, if not brought about, by the continuous maladjustment of man to his natural conditions—a change which love's evolution is made to effect by this maladjustment, and by which love avoids injustice in conditioning the personal determination of man. It is a calamity which no individual of the race can prevent in himself, for the reason that the maladjustment is racial. Though death by violence is often immediately caused by individuals or communities, yet these causes take their rise from racial and social abuses. Ancestors have induced, largely, the individual's physical maladjustment. Its correction, like its induction, must be racial. It is a racial, not individual,

retribution. It is a change of environment which can inflict no irreparable injustice upon the innocent, but protects innocence from a fatal domination of corrupted conditions; as, for example, the destruction of the innocent Canaanitish children by Joshua's army inflicted no spiritual, and therefore irreparable, injustice upon them, but protected them from spiritual, and therefore fatal, domination of the corrupted conditions in the midst of which they would have grown up. Death serves the corrective discipline of the corrigible; and it is retributive to the incorrigible only because his selfishness has persistently sought its good in these racial abuses, and sacrificed spiritual to racial conditions.

The sum of what can be affirmed of this whole matter of physical death is this: *There is that correlation in love's activities which conditions either the innocence, the progressive development, the corrective chastisement, or the just retribution of man, as a race, a community, or an individual. But man determines which of these results it shall be.*

(b) *Social retribution*, or retribution to communities, is that revolution of this class of conditions which men, as communities, determine. Personal associations, growing out of individual and racial conditions, and taking the form of households, tribes, nations, or the entire population of the earth sometimes, we term communities. Persons determine themselves as communities as well as in their individual capacity. And, as communities modify the conditions of individuals, so do individuals modify the conditions of communities. Hence, the self-determination of communities, as well as that of individuals, is susceptible to discipline and capable of progress or retrogression. Communities may be guilty of abusing their conditions, or they may properly use them; and,

hence, are susceptible to the corrective tendencies of divine love, or may incorrigibly abuse those tendencies. Hence, the uncorrected selfishness of communities and its corruption of conditions are eliminated by *self-limitation* and *self-defeat*.

The worth and strength to persist of any type of society or civilization consists in the degree to which it conserves the conditions to individual personal progress. According to this criterion communities must progress or retrograde; must go forward or backward. If they go forward the general scope of individual freedom, consistent with harmony and security, is enlarged. If they go backward individual progress is repressed. Hence, *the measure to which communities condition the progress of individuals in self-perfection* is the criterion according to which these communities must rise or fall. Thus moral resources constitute the only disinfectant which can prevent the social, civic, and material decay of a community. However great may be the development of mental and material resources in a community, their abuse, impairment, and ultimate destruction must—and, according to history, do—follow upon the neglect or corruption of moral resources.

*Progress* in the development of mental and moral resources may be attained to a degree by the efforts of both the righteous and unrighteous—jointly, though from different motives. The righteous by altruistic endeavor, the unrighteous from motives of power, gain, and pleasure, will together elaborate utilities and advance wealth and refinement. But because of this difference of motives these objective advantages are, to the former, occasions for higher determination of faith and love; to the latter they are occasions for a more inveterate and complex selfishness. With the one they tend to unifica-



tion; with the other, to segregation. The preponderance of the better element tends to the preservation and order of society, but the prevalence of the bad is the prelude to disorder and disaster. Though under the impulse of virtuous motives a nation may rise from barbarism to civilization, from civilization to refinement, yet if its moral resources become neglected or corrupted it will pass from refinement to effeminacy and thence to barbarism again. The whole conflict of the ages is reducible to that of the spiritual and the physical man—faith and selfishness; and in every case in which society has fully yielded to the dominance of selfishness decay and disaster have followed.

The amenities of divine love, in and around them, the prolonged mercy of God, and the amplified advantages incident to the general progress are appropriated by the selfish; and, instead of this "goodness of God leading (them) to repentance," they make it their opportunity for continued and adept determination in selfishness. Thus selfish society, as such, must attain incorrigibility in wickedness. Though, like Babylon and the Roman empire, nations may require centuries to work out their dissolution, it is inevitable.

*Divergence*, clear and radical, as between individuals and communities, and as between communities and nations, must result from these two lines of social self-determination. The data of faith which are implicit in the original conditions of our being must become explicit in the life and practice of the faithful. Hence, the antagonism to these conditions must become pronounced in the life and practice of the selfish. The self-developed persistence of a life of love based on faith, on the one hand, and the constructive persistence of selfish life based upon the sufferance of divine mercy and the patience of

the faithful, on the other hand, must result in the divergence of these two elements in society, politics, and trade. The faithful must become radically so; the wicked, more confirmed and implacable in wickedness.

*A crisis* must be brought about by the essential antagonism of the two becoming thus sharply defined. Though an endurable balance of influences may delay a crisis for a long time, and the hopes of the faithful and the fears of the wicked may construct temporary conciliations and conventions, yet, inevitably, the rupture must come, when the pure must renounce the vile, the vile detest the pure.

These crises must come to individuals, neighborhoods, nations, and eventually to the entire population of the earth. To individuals it may be as an outlaw forsaking the associations and restraints of a well-ordered community; or as a Noah, Abraham, Lot, Timon, Luther, or Roger Williams; the Huguenots, or Puritans, separating themselves from incorrigible social, civic, or religious corruption or oppression. Or it may be the vileness of public sentiment crucifying Jesus or crushing by violence a Socrates, a Jeremiah, a Stephen, a Paul, a Huss, or a Savonarola.

To communities and nations these crises bring either revolution or overthrow. "Revolutions never go backward" is a true saying only because wickedness, even in prosperity and dominance, works its own defeat; while the data of faith and the self-sustained resources of love persist. Such crises must be limited or far-reaching in proportion as the issue is developed in greater or smaller forms of collective life. That faith gains and selfishness loses, essentially, in every revolution implies that the antagonism is widening in area.

That revolutions never go backward evinces also the progressive tendency of the race toward the ultimate tri-

umph of love and the final failure and defeat of evil. Progress from the segregation and subsequent antagonism which have prevailed by reason of selfishness, toward harmony and love among peoples, foreshadows the ultimate community of interest and association of all the nations of the earth. The common weal will embrace not only the people of one tongue or land, but the entire population of our planet, at the time. This will be the necessary result of that age-long struggle between love and selfishness, upon their respective merits and demerits, in which love, based upon faith, will have amplified human freedom and harmony, and the aggressive benevolence of exalted individual and national character will have gathered up into one the interests of all men.

Selfishness will doubtless make, upon this wide arena, long and stubborn contention for persistence. But here, more than ever before, the divergence between love-based society and that based upon selfishness must become sharply discriminated, their antagonism recognized and actively pressed on all hands—the righteous unequivocally righteous, the wicked implacably, virulently wicked. The supreme crisis of human history must come.

*The merit of love*, demonstrated in human progress, will leave no pretext or ruse for selfishness, the selfish must choose selfishness in undisguised self-degradation. *The failure and turpitude of selfishness*, demonstrated, must expose its devotees to universal shame and contempt.

This culmination is not only the relentless behest of ontology, but the common goal of all the forces, social, political, commercial, and religious, which have shaped and continue to shape human history.

Each form of this crisis, domestic, national, or of the entire population of the earth, is a form of adjudication, a conscious realization of results, and the beginning of

a harvest up to which former sowing and growth have led.

If results could show that a finite person, and communities of finite persons, realize a higher and better determination by selfish devotement than they can by supreme devotion to that true, that ideal life which is implicit in their love-given natural conditions, then selfishness might win for itself a valid right to exist as the supreme devotement of personal being; win a valid standing as self-determining action; and become a self-conscious excellence.

But since selfishness, in even its greatest prosperity, fails of self-conscious excellence the universe is without the consciousness that evil has a right to exist. This has become more definite as society has progressed.

Further: Since selfish action increases the limitations of dependent persons and decreases the scope and power of their self-determination, thereby reducing their freedom and sinking them toward complete dependence; since it despoils them of susceptibility to progressive motives, sinks them into degrading affections and desires, rendering them mutually destructive in their ambition; since it reduces individuals and communities to conditions in which existence is either but a doubtful good or positively worse than nonbeing; since, in a word, it proves *only* degrading and disastrous it is not only a self-conscious failure and must perish, but a self-conscious crime, a universal outlaw, and deserves to perish. The magnitude of the interests which it would thwart, and of the motives against which it offends, being infinite, render it conscious of infinite turpitude.

This is the true "survival of the fittest"—a survival which illustrates that love, perfect action, is the fittest; that it is self-persistent and must survive evermore; and

that its qualities, holiness, truth, and righteousness, constitute the fittest personal character. And each crisis illustrates the faith which cancels selfishness and trusts love and its qualities to realize the highest good because they are in themselves the fittest. "The survival of the fittest" is only another phrasing of what the sacred Scriptures term "the judgment." Either phrasing embraces, essentially, three ideas: crisis, criterion, and retribution, or change of conditions. Judgment necessarily implies authority—natural, basal, intrinsic authority; and this is the authority of an independent criterion. It is independent, not because of power to destroy, but because of its power to be perfect—because of qualitative perfection. It is authoritative because perfect, fittest because of perfect quality, of perfect quality because it is perfect action, perfectly adjusted being.

It cannot be affirmed the fittest "because it produced the greatest possible good or pleasure," as the utilitarian or agnostic would say. None but the infinite mind perceives what can produce the greatest possible good or pleasure. With finite minds this is altogether a matter of inference and faith. It is faith in God as perfection which leads the faithful man to expect that love will yield the highest possible good. The proof of his faith he finds, not in grasping a knowledge of the highest good, but in the effect of faith upon his inner life, affording perfection of intention (holiness) and progress in self-determination. And now, in addition to this inner assurance of faith, there comes, in the final crisis of a community which embraces earth's entire population, the wreck of evil society to give objective demonstration that selfishness is not only not the fittest, but that it is wholly unfit to exist, and, hence, never had a right to exist. And at the same time it is demonstrated that of all the forces and qualities

ever known to man, love, based on faith in God, as the perfect, is self-persistent, self-progressive, self-perfecting. It actualizes the ideal community.

*Thus, on the earth, motivity to selfishness will be ultimately abolished.* Human love, purified and exalted upon the basis of faith in God, will have developed the ideal community for this earth. The society of the faithful in its progress will more keenly apprehend, more strikingly perceive, and interact with the activities of God's all-conditioning love. With this will have been regained the true and highest use of their environment.

No motivity to evil can survive this solution. No motive, nothing but obdurate aversion to holiness, fixed unsusceptibility to truth and right, self-determined limitation to selfish motives, can remain as incitement to evil. This does not necessarily imply that the whole mass, or even a large proportion, of earthly society will have become faithful. The implication is that such will have been the progress determined upon these divergent lines, love and selfishness, that, however large or small their numbers, the respective parties will have become so widely differentiated that the excellence of one and the worthlessness and turpitude of the other will strip selfishness of all motivity, and, hence, of all power to tempt the innocent and ignorant. Those who maintain evil society must do so upon no profession but incorrigible aversion to love, and devotion to selfishness. Hence, their retribution must ensue.

The breaking up of selfish society must naturally result. Selfishness, now all-dominating, openly pronounced and socially isolated, its followers must be without the restraints of good society among themselves, but like a den of beasts are left to mutual destruction.

Further, supernatural conditions may now develop

their full force. This final divergence of society will have been reached upon the basis of supernatural conditions which have republished and supplemented the natural data of faith by the Christ revelation of the facts—the being, the independent supremacy, the holiness, and the benevolence of God. These conditions have been abused and perverted to the purpose of this final incorrigibility. Hence, we are carried by ontological implication to the fulfillment of the seer's vision of either the explicit immanence, or the perceptible presence of the Christ; the glory of whose coming shall consume the wicked.

Although human perversions had dimmed these data of faith, as naturally revealed in the human consciousness, dependent life, self-love, reason, conscience, and will, they have been reaffirmed supernaturally as "a witness unto all nations"; and now in the culmination of their full development they constitute forces which are as necessarily retributive to selfish society as the white heat of the refiner's furnace is resolute to reject and cast out the dross.

This is the final revolution of social conditions, the final disaster to organized selfishness among men. Individual defection may possibly arise among men after this revolution which leaves all social organization harmonious and morally pure. But the social conditions upon which such defection may arise must imply that it will soon run its course and doubly emphasize the failure and crime of selfishness. Thus upon the social conditions afforded by divine love *self-limitation* and *self-defeat* will rid the earth of selfish society.

(c) *Individual retribution*, like racial and social, is simply a revolution of personal conditions brought about by individual use or abuse of those conditions. It is not to be thought as a resentful infliction which God may

arbitrarily impose or withhold, but as a result which must be implied in a collision with love, the nature of the all-conditioning God.

The decay and disaster which befall families, peoples, nations, and the race, as such, do not necessarily involve the personal retribution of individuals, except to the extent of their relations to these collective bodies. Many innocent and many positively righteous individuals, such as children, parents, creditors, or citizens, suffer in the wreck of those collective relations, but not in the fortunes of individual character. Many noble lives are burdened and physically and mentally limited by the abuse of former generations, but their individual faith or pure intention is not thereby prevented. Yet the decay or overthrow of collective associations illustrates the same principle which must obtain in the individual relation to the same all-conditioning force, infinite love. The downfall of Rome, "childless and crownless in her voiceless woe," and the despair of the pleasure-seeker, the infidel scoffer, or the man of either crude or cultured selfishness, alike incapable of faith, are subject to the same retributive principle. The main difference between man's retribution in his collective capacities, and that of individual concern, is that the dissolution of collective organizations, as such, ends their collective self-determination, and hence concludes their retribution; while individuals retain their self-determining power in the midst of social and even physical dissolution. Either they are capable of a yet unrealized ideal life, or their selfishness is not yet satisfied nor repented. Hence, change of their racial or social conditions does not interrupt their personal being.

*A future state* of individual relation to God and the universe persists in our thought. It is not necessary to elaborate an argument, here, on a future state. For, of



course, if there be no future life for man our solution of evil is complete with racial and social retribution. Many reasons, aside from revelation, have been given for belief in a future state, but usually the essential reason is overlooked. It is as follows:

*Love implies a future state for persons.* We readily see that when the Creator posits the existence of a person he forms the conditions for a self-determining power, and commits himself, in honor and truth, to the maintenance of these conditions *as long as that self-determination* exists. And, although this self-determining being may revolutionize those conditions in relation to himself, and render them retributive, they must continue *as long as he can determine their use or abuse.* Since from the beginning of man's sinful determination love's conditioning action has been at his service, it cannot be withdrawn while he entertains a self-determining purpose concerning it. He must upon these conditions be permitted to work out that purpose so long as he is conscious of it. We say "must" for the reason that creative love cannot be thought to draw back from any possible result to which it is committed by the original choice to condition the existence of persons. Love's conditioning action is put into their hands by virtue of affording them personality; and, hence, their self-determination must be permitted to *work out its own purpose.* By creating free beings love submitted to their proof of its possible worst as well as its possible best. If, in the lowest depths of self-degradation, a dependent person can develop aught which impeaches love's truth, or goodness; aught which indorses or connives at selfishness or wrong; aught of essential imperfection, then love is impeached throughout. Its right to create, or morally dominate, a universe is fairly disputed. Its morally authoritative basis for personal

determination is exploded; and selfishness has gained standing ground as a principle upon which personal character may be rightfully determined. To create beings of conditioned self-determination *implies the continuance of the conditions as long as that determination is self-conscious*, whether it be in moral harmony or disharmony with the conditioning action. The same principles upon which the evolution of love conditions the continuance of a race of self-determining sinners in this life are those upon which it must continue to condition their sinful self-determination, notwithstanding physical dissolution.

Moreover, in the case of the faithful, physical dissolution finds them in essential harmony with divine love and in process of progressive self-determination. In many cases, too, their conscious steadfastness in love and fixed aversion to evil have been achieved. Such has been the trial of their faith that subjection of the actual to the ideal life has become habitual with them long before death; it has been the high standpoint from which they have performed their duties and endured their ills. One who could say of his practical life, "One thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God," is entirely philosophic when, summoned to execution, he says, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." The confidence of Socrates was not an illusion of the imagination, but the conscious persistence of a life of devotion to the ideal which led him to say to his weeping friends, "You may dispose of my body as you like, but I shall be with the gods." The divine philosophy, as expressed in view of persecution for righteousness' sake, is this: "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."

We have seen in a former chapter that the self-determined freedom, harmony, and security of the universe are the essential qualities of its perfection, and are the conditions to the highest good which love can evolve. Hence, the persons who in this life have achieved these qualities, or are in a way to determine them, are among the agents who alone can actually accomplish the purpose of the universe. Persons who have attained these qualities, or are in an attitude to attain them, and have, by physical death, cast off their physical heritage of racial abuses, have simply gained the starting point for *untrammelled* personal progress. And so long as the innocent and the faithful who must determine the universe can amplify their personal freedom, can determine a higher development, can aspire to a yet unrealized ideal self, or attain a higher good, love, the nature of that divine action which conditions their being, implies their immortality. This is but the process of realizing the divine altruism; which, being based on the perfect altruistic freedom of God, is the limitless measure of universal good.

*As to children*, we may say: At what time in an individual career conscious self-determination takes its rise is difficult if not impossible to detect. But when it does arise it is the beginning of the individual use of one's personal nature—the actual differentiation of individual from racial life. We may definitely observe evidences of conscious self-determination in infants, yet this cannot be assumed to indicate their earliest, even pre-natal, conscious individuality or will. If the infant have a history preceding the rise of self-determination it is a period in which it cannot be thought to have developed any but racial life. Not having exerted an act of self-determination, it does not become conscious of individual identity,

or selfhood. Hence, should physical death take place, which is simply a form of racial retribution, a catastrophe to race conditions, it suffers no individual retribution. Indeed, we know of no implication or datum, of any kind, upon which we can affirm that such pre-personal infancy can survive physical death, can live in a future state.

After self-determining action is once begun, however faintly, the personal nature is individualized, and individual self-consciousness takes its rise, and retains personal identity through all subsequent changes; until by self-determined abuse of the personal nature it may be sunken in complete *self-limitation* and ultimately lost. The rise and earlier development of infantile personality is doubtless, in accordance with *circumstances* and *instinctive impulses*, and trusts its conditions with entire sincerity. This is the faith of childhood; and it maintains the innocence of childhood, although these circumstances and impulses upon which it acts may have been depraved by ancestry and social causes. Its debased racial conditions may impose upon it disease, feebleness, defective physical organization, or death; and social surroundings may afford it little but villainous incitements. Yet the implicit sincerity with which it personally acts in accordance with its conditions is an innocent, yes, virtuous, use of its personal nature, and determines its character as one of innocent and virtuous intention. Not until it is sufficiently advanced to deliberately and of purpose *reject* pure intention and *adopt* selfish intention does it abuse its personal conditions and form corrupt character. Hence, if retribution in its racial or social conditions overtake it while in this character of individual innocence it must be thought to continue into a future state as an innocent person of morally pure intention. It takes rank

with that class of beings whose further development will be in the absence of temptation, who "do always behold the face of God," who must depend upon environment for consciousness of moral security until it is acquired by association with those whose conscious security has been self-determined within an environment of "much tribulation."

When a child is sufficiently advanced in a knowledge of his conditions to recognize the moral criterion of intentions in conscience he may then have a self-conscious faith; he may then determine to subject himself to what he understands to be true; and may feel, as a result, that this faith purifies or keeps pure his intentions as he advances upon an ever-widening scope of self-determination. Although he may not grasp a logical definition of faith, yet just as surely does he enact "the subjection of the actual to the ideal life"; and just as surely does he cancel selfishness and lovingly determine himself toward spiritual harmony, freedom, and security.

On the other hand, a child at this age of personal advancement may begin a course of deliberate rejection of conscience and faith; and in case death intervenes his appearance in a future state must be thought that of a person suffering individual retribution. His consciousness of the *magnitude* of his motives to good, which he has rejected, must be the measure of his retribution.

*In adults*, individual persistence in a selfish life may be, in many cases, but an idle and indiscriminating drifting with circumstances. And it may thus take the form of a merely racial life or result in the ultimate sinking of personal consciousness into the helpless dependence of a mere thing. This view assumes that there are persons who are so entirely content with the satisfaction of barely physical needs, and whose interest in their existence is

so far below the normal aspirations of a child, that they fail to discriminate themselves as other than parts of a common herd. They live and die without reflection as to any definite purpose of individual life or destiny. This may be largely owing to circumstances and their weakness to rise above circumstances, even to the extent of asserting their individual responsibility of any kind or degree. Though they may have felt at some time the assertion of conscience, yet this has been so habitually yielded to the behest of circumstances that it is practically swamped.

The consciousness of guilt in such persons must be faint, and the consciousness of moral sincerity equally indefinite. They seem conscious of nothing which could be termed self-determination except a weak surrender to natural impulse as influenced by circumstances. *Personality is surrendered during racial life*, and racial life yielded in physical death. The opportunity of personal determination, like the talent hid in the ground, is soon forfeited and *they perish*.

If one live merely a racial life he lives only as a brute lives, and his may be termed a brute life. The essential difference between brute life and personal life is that a brute lives *for its nature* while a person lives for a mode, or type, of life which he can build upon his nature; using his nature as means and conditions by which to determine its qualities. *The sum of these qualities is character*. By persistence in this action he fixes his character, or quality, of life upon so much of his nature as does not perish in the using. This modified nature becomes the means for the further development of character; and thus, eventually, self-determination may realize perfect conditioned personality. Brute life is living for his nature, to follow its impulses and make the satisfaction of its desires the

object of life. While this is, perhaps, the most crude form of incorrigible selfishness it is readily eliminated by self-limitation and self-defeat.

*There are other classes* of persons whose selfishness is devoted to living for their nature in its intellectually higher and more ambitious propensions. Nevertheless, they live for their nature, as an end, ignoring the truth that it is but the means for attaining a higher type of life which they may superadd, and into which all of their nature which does not perish with the using should be incorporated. Many of this class give a *quasi* recognition to the facts disclosed in their natures, and which afford a basis for faith—the perceived facts of being and dependence, and the implied fact of the Independent which we cannot get rid of, and also self-love, reason, conscience, and will. They harbor, also, an expectation to act, sometime, in accordance with these data of faith; but, living in present neglect of the great object of personal life, they devote themselves to the immediate satisfaction of natural appetite, passion, and propension. Although they may be highly intelligent and do often possess great will-force, their life is only a highly endowed animalism. This for the reason that they are devoted to the satisfying of their present selves, and are rejecting the true, the ideal self which their reason and conscience tell them they ought to actualize. Their character is deliberately self-determined selfishness; and, consequently, the intervention of physical death removes them hence with characters of uncorrected sin. Dying without having actualized their quasi expectation to “sometime,” as a matter of convenience, turn to repentance and faith, they must be thought to have entered upon a future state of retribution. Obdurately impenitent while enjoying immunity from retribution, their quasi intention to sometime reform

for convenience' sake is only a selfish forecast which can never be capable of faith. It is simply a form of incorrigibility.

*Incorrigible selfishness*, definitely purposed, is brought about by habitually putting aside the authority of conscience, diverting the attention from it, and thus determining fixed unsusceptibility to motives of faith and love. The person who can choose to continue in selfishness at any stage or reject love in any degree of its incentives is capable of *persisting* also in his choice of selfishness, and of rejecting love at that stage when he knows that the one is wholly false and the other true. This is total moral incorrigibility; the total abuse of his conditions. Thus continuance in sin until the incorrigible stage is reached is clearly *practicable*.

Prior to this, even when the false tendency of sin and the true tendency of love are perceived, he must abandon the one and adopt the other, or else must deliberately choose antagonism to love. Persistence in this choice determines his perversion of the conditions of individual faith, and must establish in his nature a fixed aversion to love. If, in the experience or observation of any individual, community, or age, fixed indifference to the moral behest of love has been reached, there can be no motivity to their self-determination except the desire of selfish satisfaction.

Such indifference seems wholly a matter of purposed practical infidelity—infidelity to the truth, and positive aversion to holiness and God. To this aversion the undeviating activities of love which condition him must be a constant offense; and in changed circumstances, when he can no longer make all-conditioning love serve his selfishness, it must be to him torture.

Selfishness, for the reason that it is self-love perverted



into opposition to self-perfection and the perfection of others, finds its supreme object of aversion in God. Nor can such a person repent his selfishness from any other motive than its unpleasurable results; and this, of course, is not moral repentance at all; has in it no moral contrition, no motive but selfishness. That a person thus selfishly determined will regret his disaster cannot be doubted, but selfish incitement to this regret cannot be thought to work moral purifying. He is still morally incorrigible.

Previous to a retributive change of conditions selfish motives may be appealed to for the purpose of arousing attention to the moral enormity of sin. This is possible so long as the authority of conscience is not discarded, and may incite to genuine repentance. But to a person in whom selfishness has reached the point of self-determined indifference to the data of faith, especially the demand of conscience, there can be no remedial or recovering conditions.

*Future Probation.*—The question arises at this point whether persons, after having by physical death undergone racial retribution, must be subject to individual retribution; and whether this is necessarily implied in love? Or may they not continue in probationary conditions, individually, notwithstanding physical death has removed them from the racial and social conditions of this life? Or, again, may all-conditioning love imply individual probation in a future state?

The answer to this question cannot include the case of children nor of multitudes of adults, who, innocent of self-determined rejection of love, have passed into a future life of development in the "presence of God." Doubtless these will occupy conditions to development, *but not in a sense which implies the moral possibility of fail-*

*ure or defection.* Their conditions will be those of overwhelming motives to love and entire absence of temptation to evil, because associated with the innocent and the faithful, and freed from corrupt racial and social conditions. But such conditions will afford no *proving* by self-determined conquest of their natural susceptibility to selfishness. Nor can such conditions yield a consciousness of moral security as against supposable temptation to sin, except as such consciousness may be eventually acquired by *association* with those who have, through discipline of evil, determined their security for themselves.

It has been urged: If the children go to "the presence of God" directly why does not God have them all die, and thus end the continuance of the race in the sinful conditions of this life? This is equivalent to asking, Why have a human race at all? The answer to all this is: The evolution of that ultimate security in personal harmony and freedom, which is essential to the perfection of the universe, can be attained only by the development of an *unsusceptibility to selfishness* by the determination of finite persons themselves. The self-elimination of one's susceptibility to evil is requisite to a perfect personality, and hence to the perfect universe. Absence of temptations or incitements to evil may secure the harmony of innocent or unfallen beings, but it cannot develop the highest order of moral character, for the reason that susceptibility to evil temptation may remain in them; at least they can have no consciousness of perfect security in themselves, as against possible temptation. To this class of persons may belong angels who have ever "kept their first estate," and children who die and enter upon association with persons and influences termed "angels who always behold the face of God," before they have consciously

renounced their sense of dependence, perverted their self-love, and rejected the authority of conscience. But these alone, and in these conditions, can never realize a perfect finite being or universe. Perfect harmony of persons can be realized only by beings of perfect moral freedom; and perfect moral freedom can be realized only in the consciousness of perfect moral security; and this security can be realized only by the self-elimination, or neutralization, of personal susceptibility to selfishness, and this susceptibility can be eliminated only by the person himself in confirmed faith and love; and this *confirmed* faith and love cannot be inherited or imparted as a natural endowment by the Creator, but can only be attained by the exercise and discipline of years in experienced overcoming of temptation to selfishness.

Angels, infants, and innocent heathen may see and associate with the *faithful*, who have determined their own security, and may thus attain ultimately a like security. But this is not probation, in the sense in which the term is used by the advocates of that doctrine, but is only the development of these classes into this unsusceptibility by observation, association, influence of and sympathy with the faithful who constitute the nucleus and "main body" of the perfect universe by having determined their own conscious security against selfishness.

But we return to the question: Is a future state necessarily thought one of individual retribution? That retribution is a revolutionary change of conditions we have already seen. That physical death is such a change, not only of race conditions, but also of social and individual environment, must be admitted. Now, must passage into a "future state" imply a loss of all conditions to personal correction and recovery to the individual who has been unrepentantly or incorrigibly selfish in this life?

We do not aim, here, to give an extended argument; especially is it aside from the method of this work to invoke scriptural exposition. Our answer must aim to give the implications of love, which, at this stage of its evolution, are decisive of the question.

We have seen that divine love, by creating dependent persons, requires that the rise of their personality must be conditioned at the lowest point at which progressive self-determination is possible. Now, if this racial and social life affords the lowest and easiest conditions which all-conditioning love can posit for the rise, progress, and perfecting of finite persons, then the debasement of individual life in these conditions must be thought such a debasement as to be totally unsusceptible to the influence of any conditions to personal improvement which love can ever afford. To those who have perverted and debased these lowest conditions of personal development physical death must be thought a change which renders them conscious of conditions more desperate and hopeless. By no line of reasoning can we conclude that the abuse of our present nature can result in improved, more susceptible, future nature. And if individuals continue to debase these conditions which are most favorable to progressive motives, perverting them from the moral susceptibility of childhood innocence to self-determined depravity, death must be to them a change to a radical and hopeless maladjustment toward love and God.

The present bodily conditions must be thought requisite means by which man begins and in this life continues his personal interaction with divine love, whether that love be naturally or supernaturally disclosed to him. By means of this interaction with divine love he is able to enter upon the lowest conditions of faith; and upon faith he becomes able to love God, and determines himself in

harmony with God. If physical death takes place at any point in the process of this innocent or faithful self-determination he continues in harmonious interaction with God, notwithstanding the falling away of bodily conditions. He must be classed with disembodied persons who are in either innocent or faithful harmony with love in the future state.

But if, while in these bodily conditions, he has determined himself selfishly he must be thought as not only out of harmony with love, but as morally below the lowest form of faith. As long as he is in possession of bodily conditions he has contact with the means of correction and recovery to the lowest stage of faith; and may begin again the process of faithful self-determination. But if physical death supervenes when by selfishness he is sunken to the lowest point at which faith may arise he is left without means or conditions of correction or recovery to the lowest form of faith. He must be thought a disembodied person to whom faith is impracticable; hence, is incapable of corrective chastisement and harmonization with love. There is no need of talking about any means of moral purifying or development other than faith; and if the lowest forms of faith can arise only upon those conditions which divine love affords as the lowest upon which personal determination may arise, it is clear that the lowest forms of faith are impossible without those conditions. As long as he is in this body, aided by its needs and its racial and social sympathies of faith and love, as also by the direct incarnation and personal declaration of divine love in Christ, he has contact with the conditions to spiritual recovery. But, disembodied, this bridge between his self-degraded spirit and the conditions to faith and love is gone.

“But if a supernatural intervention, as in Christ, avails

to give renewed conditions of faith to depraved men in this life may not divine love imply *further* supernatural revelations which may in a future world afford conditions of saving faith to those, at least, who have died unrepentant?"

This plausible query is neutralized by the following considerations, namely: It is based upon a misconception of the Christ-revelation, which sought, not the obdurate, but the ignorant and degraded. Secondly, he who has determined positive aversion to faith, in himself, has no susceptibility which any revelation can incite to spiritual reform. When, by racial defilement and social perversion, the *natural* motives to individual faith have been obscured from those who are yet susceptible, supernatural interposition reiterates them. These motives to faith, always implicit in man's nature, are the grounds upon which mankind always praise or blame each other. They are never replaced as motives to moral purifying. No supposed revelation which ignores them can make good its claim to divine origin. What were the ancient disclosures of Jehovah, the independent, holy, and gracious, or guiding the retributive storm of abused and revolutionized conditions, but the reiteration of these natural data of faith? What were the words and works of Christ but reminders of the dependence of man and the independence of truth, moral authority, and merciful solicitude of God? All supernatural revelation has its value in maintaining man's recognition of these motives to faith.

Moreover, if it is a fact that supernatural intervention is to renew and intensify the motivity to faith in this life, that fact implies a *negative answer* to the above query. If, in a future state, better conditions to faith may be had by the selfish, then all supernatural revelation

in this world, including the ministry and atonement of Christ, are superfluous and are discredited. The incarnation of God in Christ, assuming our racial and social conditions as a medium of contact with our race, implies that these are needed to condition saving faith. When physical death removes our bodily conditions this medium is lost. The evolution of love had, doubtless, developed the conditions to individual self-determination *in their essential order*; and if self-determination has sunken the person's susceptibility beneath the lowest, simplest, and most direct conditions to faith he cannot be thought more susceptible to them in the more advanced stages of that evolution.

*Obdurate selfishness* in this life, as against these conditions, sinks the personal susceptibility to them, and establishes aversion toward them. Hence, it renders the person *incapable of corrective probation*, though heaven and hell were perceptibly open before him. The chasm between his self-determined unsusceptibility to the ideal and the higher conditions to the realization of an ideal life must be thought impassable. In a word, he has sunken his capability for saving faith *below the lowest conditions to such faith*.

It is the *enlightened* selfishness of this world that is the most obdurate. Those who are selfish amid the most highly intellectual conceptions of the ideal are the most incapable of faith. This incapability is owing to the widened chasm between their intelligent discrimination of an ideal life and their sunken susceptibility to its motives, induced by selfish self-determination. Those who are not won to a life of faith when young rarely are when old—owing to the widened discrepancy between their debased susceptibilities and the motives to faith. The discrepancy between the selfish affections of the

obdurate and love's higher disclosures in the future is a chasm which our thought cannot bridge. *Nothing but an undebatable revelation from God can afford ground for a belief that it is possible.*

We find, therefore, no ground upon which to hope, much less affirm possible conditions in a future state in which the impenitent of this present life may become susceptible to motives to faith and love. But as their selfish life has narrowed the scope of their moral freedom, increased their limitations, and diminished their personality we can neither affirm nor hope anything better for them than a gradual, though appalling, agonizing process of the *sinking of personality*; until personal consciousness, perhaps all consciousness, is lost. As surely as love is love, it implies that the conditions of this life are the most favorable to man's laying hold of eternal life. And the incarnation of God in Christ implies that these conditions are necessary to human salvation by faith. To sink himself below their reach *is to perish.*

*The Process of Self-limitation.*—This fact which marks selfish life is implied in conditioned personality. The progressive nature which divine love has afforded to all conditioned persons, and which by innocent self-determination gives rise to individual self-consciousness, followed by conscious enlargement of freedom while faithful determination continues, is reversed and undone by selfish determination. The process of self-limitation closes in upon the will like the fabled prison walls which, ample at first, shrank until they crushed the prisoner in their embrace. Step by step the conditions to self-determination have been wasted by abuse, and now it abides only as a fixed, stolid sentiment of personal malevolence, powerless to do aught but nurse its self-consuming aversion to love.



*The sinking of personality*, in a future state, is a plain implication of love, and is manifested in the same sinking process which is begun in this present life. It is not to be thought as a positive infliction, but a result which is implied in the nature of our personality. It is brought about by the person himself, by his narrowing the scope of his self-determining freedom—by ignoring the independent truth, right, and good which God represents, and which God is to the universe and to every individual person thereof. All determination of his life in harmony with these infinite motives to faith is intercepted. Moreover, his susceptibility to them is destroyed. Selfishness, even in its most amiable or imposing external form, is nothing better than personal devotion to racial and social conditions, whether in their use or abuse. In their use it is personal devotion to no motives except those which are temporal. It ignores those which are eternal, and consequently abuses his nature by subjecting it to that which is beneath essential personality. Having, like Dives, sought his “good things” in this world, he has sunken his personality beneath all susceptibility to, or capability for, the good things of a future state. In their abuse he not only subjects his nature to his racial and social interests, but to these in the most degrading and brutelike form; making the incidental pleasures the special objects of his pursuit. He thus not only subjects his personal determination to racial and social enjoyment, but to the most limited scope of these conditions. By subjecting his mental and moral capabilities to the behests of appetite, passion, avarice—indeed, selfishness in any and all forms—he becomes their prisoner. As a man by physical and mental abuses limits his physical and mental capabilities, so by the abuse of his entire nature he imposes limitations upon himself which close in upon his

will on all sides. His self-love, having become wholly selfishness, finds no scope for self-determination except in seeking pleasures incident to its means and instruments. Having rendered himself unsusceptible to any but selfish motives, he is incapable of determining himself unselfishly, even when disaster overwhelms him with the consciousness of disharmony with all his conditions. Having made himself the slave of perverted circumstances, he has become wholly dependent upon them for satisfaction. Now that they are exhausted their absence leaves him a morbid embodiment of selfish desire. The tide of earthly circumstances over which he might have directed his course to a happy port, but upon which he chose to float idly, or to play the pirate upon the common welfare, avoiding every port, now leaves him stranded on an unexplored and incongenial shore.

*Self-determined aversion to love* has positive self-consciousness within him. The respects in which progressive determination has been afforded him by the gracious conditions of his early life were devotion to a perfect personal life, a perfect universe, and companionship with a perfect God—either implying the others. He has rejected them all. Now that he has established, in himself, aversion to love his woe is not only the loss of progressive personality, substituted by an established process of self-limitation, but the torture of existence amid the prevalence of a perfecting universe and a perfect God. The spirit of perfectness, the "Holy Spirit," present to his conscience—but which he had evaded, rejected, despised, hated, blasphemed, while that Spirit sought to woo him—is now the all-pervading atmosphere of love in which he writhes with agonizing aversion.

*How long* the process of the sinking of personality may continue is a question which we have no exact data from

which to answer. The relative persistence of different persons in the agony of perishing by self-limitation is implied in the nature of personality. One's personal self-consciousness must be thought persistent in proportion as his selfish purpose is definitely determined. Hence, selfish personality, in its most elaborate determination, may be expected to cling to its purpose longest, and therefore persist longest in the agony of the perishing process. "He shall be beaten with many stripes." But all-conditioning love cannot be affirmed to continue the personal nature in conscious torture after the consciousness of self-determination is lost.

Thus the ultimate extinction of the personal consciousness of the obdurate is implied in the nature of personality and the evolution of love, first, in the complete self-limitation and self-sinking of selfish personality by the uncorrected abuse of all-conditioning love; second, in the realization of the perfect universe, the companionship of the finite with the infinite, in undisturbed harmony, freedom, and security. In all this conflict between love and selfishness love has been nothing other than all-embracing, all-conditioning love; but when antagonized, outraged, blasphemed, perverted, a consuming fire. (This question is considered further in the chapter entitled "Eschatology.")

3. The result of this process, confirming faith by demonstrating the progress and persistence of love, as perfect self-determining action, and demonstrating the futility and turpitude of selfishness, settles all the questions which sin had raised and abolishes all objective incentives to evil.

The self-determined wreck of evil by the sinking of the personality of the impenitent will demolish all objective motivity to selfishness. This utmost demonstration

of selfishness, establishing a universal conviction of its utter worthlessness and entire turpitude, must abolish its power and place in the realm of motivity. It must fix in all minds a *total aversion to selfishness*. It must fill all with a changeless, unqualified conviction that *love alone is perfect action*, infinite in unconditioned egoism, eternal in exhaustless altruism. The perfect altruistic freedom of God realizes a perfect objective exposition in limitless benevolence. *This is the "glory of God."* It must inspire in each finite person a pure self-love so firmly devoted to the realization of love's ideal of their personal life as to render them forever unsusceptible to selfishness. No motives to induce the innocent to sin can survive this solution. No motives but such as love discloses can arise in the universal consciousness.

That a progressive universe, conditioned in ignorance, weakness, temptation, and mercy, is the only conceivable ideal universe, has been sufficiently set out. That such progressive universe is by its nature exposed to error, sin, and sorrow, has been fully recognized. That error, sin, and sorrow must be possible to any personal universe which is fit to be created is an unavoidable conclusion. The divine choice to create is vindicated as to its holiness and benevolence. We have seen the glorious object, a holy, loving, good, free, and secure companionship of finite with infinite being. We have more than hinted that this companionship is but the foundation for wider and nobler realization of the possibilities of being; and that the eternal range of progressive development, conditioned in harmony, freedom, and security, will be but the perpetual realization of the Creator's ideal. The realization of this ideal vindicates the action which conditioned the long, weary curse of sin which obtained in preliminary stages—vindicates it by having afforded holy and merci-

ful conditions upon which each person could not only abide in harmony with divine love, but find correction and recovery from evil.

We have seen the innocence of ignorant error, the minimum of guilt and harm attending error and sin, the corrective and disciplining tendency which love imposes upon error and sin, conditioning all persons with hope and help. We have recognized, also, that to each individual all the suffering of corrective chastisement is over-compensated by the resulting recovery of purity, strength, and endless development of character; that the ills imposed by heredity and environment cannot prevent this spiritual exaltation, but are made to contribute to it. The outraged consciousness of martyrdom, too, has its compensating triumph in the more immediate actualization of an ideal life.

All this wild and awful scene of wrong and suffering has its compensation only in love. Love, with its power to inspire and glorify the conscious spirit, to realize to that spirit the perfection of holiness, truth, beauty, and good; love, with its rapture ever transcending and outliving its pang, enduring its torture only to burst forth in proportionately larger development; love, with its implication of immortality and ever-advancing ideals—is the consolation, as it is the source, of the universe. As love is the self-sufficient nature of the unconditioned reality, it is self-sufficient as the nature of a conditioned universe. Love, and immortality for love's sake, are the surviving, all-compensating factors which can weave every error, sorrow, and repentance into the will's "armour of light," the knightly long-sufferer's cloth of gold.

Then let it be clearly recognized that however great may have been the sum of error, sin, and sorrow in the

universe, it is the least that could be secured by the Creator, in proportion to the highest good of dependent persons; and that the greatness of its volume is due to these persons themselves who alone could have made it less. Let it be remembered, also, that, wherein it could not be prevented by divine love, it is held within conditions which provide for either its merciful remedy or its self-extinction. Nothing but an unreasoning, perverse devotion to sin can prevent its corrective chastening in any individual soul.

Thus it appears that the Creator, in choosing to create finite beings, but indulges love's eternal altruistic spirit, and gives it the most beneficent, because perfect, determination. He develops the ever-increasing good of his altruistic life as he ever realizes the infinite good of his unconditioned egoistic life. The evolution of love, advancing in its eternal process of altruistic determination, maintains the original unity of holiness and benevolence, and assures the ultimate oneness of the actual and the ideal universe.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ATONING FACT

The ideal, to this summit God descends, man rises.—*Victor Hugo.*

*Perfect action*, which constitutes perfect being—the unconditioned, or infinite, person—we have found to be the original unit. The nature of that perfect action we have found to be an unconditioned, infinitely free life, devoted to the realization of absolute perfection; and that this self-enacted and perfectly adjusted nature is love. In a word, we have seen that perfect action is love; and that love is an order of self-determining action in which is realized infinite self-consciousness, or unconditioned egoism. Moreover, this perfect, love-achieved egoism affords conditions to perfect altruism without being conditioned by it, and thus the existence of persons, or a universe of persons, other than the Infinite Person, is possible and probable to our thought, as also certain to our experience.

In the determination, or carrying out, of perfect altruism we have seen the rise of relative consciousness in the Deity—the divine sonship—and also the putting forth of objective action by the divine Son in the creation of an objective universe of dependent persons.

We have also seen, in a former chapter, the genesis of evil, and the necessity of merciful benevolence as a condition to the existence of a perfect personal universe, and its solution of “the problem of evil.” It has appeared, too, that this solution, whether in individual character or collective forms of life, is one in which through a long series of ages sin demonstrates its total lack of merit and its infinite demerit; and love proves its limitless altruism—

tic capability, sustaining the utmost test imposed by sinful freedom; outliving the full determination of sin, and affording the conditions to the development of a universe regenerated, purified, harmonious, and secure in the utmost freedom possible to dependent persons—thus realizing the eternal companionship of infinite and finite being. In a word: Love is able, unimpaired, to successfully maintain the conditions of a universe of perfect finite persons.

We have seen, further, that through all this evolution of love its immaculate ideal abides uncompromised, its devotion to that ideal unwavering, its eternal altruistic spirit unabated, holy, and benevolent.

But hitherto we have said nothing of the subjective strain, so to speak, which is experienced by a love which, though holy because of its devotion to the perfect, pours out unfailing mercy to an unholy race, affords conditions for measureless sin and sorrow, gives scope for the self-demonstration of sinful freedom, endures incalculable abuse; yet is unimpaired in either holiness or benevolence. In this "strain" upon the evolution of love must be found, if found at all, the atoning fact.

All theories of atonement which involve a "legal fiction," a "penal substitution," or a "commercial transaction" are crude and unsatisfactory because an atoning fact nowhere clearly appears in them. All theories of atonement by martyrdom or "moral influence" are superficial, and evaporate when analyzed—evaporate because they contain no atoning fact. To affirm an atonement is to claim that there exists the force of atoning fact in the relations of the Creator to the universe; and to teach a *philosophy* of atonement is warranted only by such fact having been clearly discriminated as implied, disclosed, or both, by love. Hence, a treatment of the subject should



develop, first, an atoning fact; and, secondly, its relation to man as implied in divine love.

The simplest definition of atonement is "a bringing together," but as habitually associated with religious sacrifice it includes, also, the idea of suffering on the part of the one by whom this "bringing together," or reconciliation, is accomplished. In addition to these contents of the term the fact or idea of vicarious sacrifice on the part of the atoning one is insisted upon by some and rejected by others, as essential to complete the notion of atonement for sin.

The incompatibility between the fact of a holy God and the fact of his upholding a world, rendered unholy by sinners, in merciful conditions turns all thoughtfully religious minds toward a reconciliation either maintained or at some time achieved in his action toward them. But how maintained, or at what point achieved, and at what cost are questions upon which there has been much disagreement. Lack of clear discrimination in philosophy must result in great discrepancy and lack of clearness in the interpretation of data, whether these data be natural or revealed. To pursue the line of love's evolution seems to the writer the only safe method by which to ascertain what of atonement it implies—whether atonement is a fact, and, if so, what is the form of that fact. Having found such fact, it may then appear whether it has been originally maintained or supplementarily achieved; whether it involves reconciliation and suffering; and whether that suffering is sacrificial and vicarious. Hence, reconciliation, suffering, sacrifice, vicariousness, each or all may be recognized as contents of the question. Do any or all of them exist in fact, or are they mere figures of speech; and if all really exist, do they fill out the notion of atonement for sin? A true answer to

these questions must decide as to the fact and philosophy of atonement.

The notion of atonement *must* imply—

1. That there is an *absolute authority*, a sacred, changeless imperative in something.
2. That this imperative is *propitiated*, satisfied, by somewhat.

It *may* imply—

3. That *suffering*, agony, is incident to this propitiation.
4. That this suffering may be *undeserved* by the sufferer, and is, therefore, a sacrifice.
5. It may be, in some sense, a *displacement* of suffering in others, whose suffering should result from the same cause, and therefore, this displacement is vicarious.

Some of these contents are recognized in some form in every theory of atonement, but may have been erroneously distributed, or cumbered with crudities imposed by inadequate systems. Two things, at least, ought to appear here, namely: Whether in the evolution of love there exist facts which are essentially atoning in their character, and what is their true relation in their evolution?

As we set about this inquiry let us reiterate with emphasis the definition that "*Love is action which is conscious of an ideal, to the realization of which it is devoted.*" It is devotion to perfectness. It is the only kind of action, of which we can conceive, which is capable of realizing unconditioned perfection; *the only conceivable nature of perfect being*. In the infinite ego it is unconditioned intention ever realizing absolute perfection. And in finite beings it is supreme, conditioned intention, the only kind of action known to us by which we can determine conditioned perfection.

In its unconditioned action it can experience no

obstruction, friction, or delay, but constantly actualizes infinite perfection; but when we think of its evolution in an objective universe we must think of it as *conditioned* devotement—it achieves its ends by the use of means. It is devotement to the realization of a finite ideal which, when achieved, will be a perfect, though dependent, universe. In seeking to actualize such ideal universe divine love is related to that ideal as subject to object; hence, its action is conditioned by that object, and by the means and supplementary agencies by which that object is attained. The manner and extent of its action are mainly decided by the type, or kind, of universe it seeks. This type is that ideal which it strives to actualize.

Since love is devotion to the perfect, it is a perfect universe, only, which its evolution can have in view. This action, though conditioned, is perfect within its conditions. God's action, which is characterized as the going forth of love only by virtue of its devotion to perfection, cannot be thought self-conscious love if it seek less than the ideal, the perfect. Not only does love realize the absolute, or infinite, ideal in the Independent Being, and the relative ideal in the "Eternal Son"—Creator—but, having chosen to create a universe, love must be thought as devoted to the realization of an ideal object, the ideal universe.

Moreover, an ideal universe when actually realized will be a perfect universe. A perfect universe must realize the highest conditioned good; and divine love acting objectively, hence within limiting conditions, cannot be thought as implying less than this highest conditioned good.

The essential conditions upon which love can realize a universe are clearly of two classes:

I. *The ideal sought to be realized.*

## II. *The action which achieves this realization.*

I. *In the ideal sought to be realized we find this sacred authority which decides what manner of universe must be evolved.* This sacred authority of the ideal is the first datum in atonement. A former chapter treats at some length of the authority of the ideal, and hence it is needful to remember here only that the sacred, or the holy, is the quality of intentional perfection; that, whether it be the actual perfection which God intentionally realizes in himself or the ideal perfection which is intended to be realized in the universe, it is still the intending, or purposing, perfection that is holy.

Further, the ideal could have no authority, no moral imperative, if its actualization were impossible. But since love does actualize the infinite ideal in the Infinite Being its ideal is absolutely authoritative in all being. We may think of the ideal as already actualized, practical perfection, or as actualizable ideal perfection. In either case its authority is absolute; it is the holy, or moral, imperative. It is because love only is perfect action and intentionally realizes the perfect, conditioned or unconditioned, that its ideal is holy and authoritative. All other action is subject to love's moral authority, and its fitness or unfitness must be adjudged by the criterion of love's perfection. This, for the reason that love is the only action which can and does achieve actual perfection of being. It is plain, then, that the ideal is a *changeless condition* in the evolution of love. It is the sacred, uncompromisable imperative.

## II. *The Action which 'Achieves this Realization.—*

Action which satisfies the requirements of its ideal is propitiation; action which propitiates the perfect in behalf of the imperfect. Now, since God has chosen an evolution of love, that evolution must satisfy love's holy

imperative by actualizing love's ideal—realizing perfection both in individual finite persons and in the universe. This is the same as to say that love is devotion to the perfect in the process of evolution as well as in the perfect nature of God. Then, if love's evolutionary action is devoted to the realizing of ideal finite personality and thereby an ideal universe, *that devotement propitiates the ideal*. Though this action may be conditioned, modified, limited, abused, perverted by finite persons, yet if it maintains conditions upon which the perfect finite person and universe may be achieved it thereby propitiates the holy imperative of its ideal. The sacred ideal which is actually explicit in divine love is the *imperative* fact: Devotion to that ideal is the *propitiating* fact in love's evolution of the universe. The action which affords the conditions for the perfection of finite being, though once sinful, is the propitiating, satisfying, *atoning fact; atonement for sinners*.

Again, let it be kept in mind that an ideal universe, when practically realized, must afford the highest conditioned good; and, hence, it is the realization of perfect benevolence. Thus love, which realizes absolute holiness and infinite good in the divine egoism, is not only perfectly holy, but also perfectly benevolent. Love's ideal, the changeless imperative, is holy and benevolent in *all* personal determination. And love's devotement, which seeks to realize the ideal in a universe, is not only holy, but benevolent to the highest degree of conditioned perfection. Hence its devotement is the satisfaction which the ideal requires. To thus devote its action to the maintenance of the conditions upon which all finite persons may realize ideal finite personality *is to propitiate the absolute authority of the ideal in behalf of those persons*.

If God were simply and singly altruistic, wholly de-

voted to conferring advantages upon others, regardless of the use or abuse to which those others might appropriate such advantages, he would thus ignore the ideal and become a willing party to such abuse; a willing party to selfishness in others. He would have no personal, subjective interest in thus giving out, save the gratification of his power to give; which, in such case, would be a selfish and wicked satisfaction. His giving would lose the quality of benevolence, as well as that of holiness; and would, therefore, cease to be love. It would be a vain prodigality of resources fraught with degrading tendency to its recipients, and, hence, a connivance at their degradation. It could realize no higher self-determination than a vainglorious exhibition of power.

Further, in the event any one of its recipients should regret his own degrading abuses and wish for something better he could find no sympathy nor incitement in God's action to help him back to moral purity; it could not condition moral recovery. Hence love, regarded as simple, unqualified altruism, omnipotent almsgiving, would be unable to achieve a perfect personal universe. Altruism without intention to promote excellence in its recipients is simply universal selfishness; and must drag Creator and creature down to common selfishness and discord.

Yet all the imperfection which infidels think they see in the world, and all the complaints of pessimists, arise from this absurd view of divine love.

But love, in its devotion to the practical realization of an ideal universe, is thereby essentially holy, because perfect in its intention; and, hence, this very holiness gives assurance of beneficent altruism. But if love had no method of bestowing but to create beings with the largest capacity to receive, and to pour upon them the largest gifts, it is impossible to see how it could achieve a uni-

verse of higher motives than hope and fear. Hope and fear, as supreme motives, would be the inspiration of selfishness in dependent beings, and the exponent of selfishness in the independent; and so love would vanish.

When, then, on this sin-cursed planet, we say, by authority of either reason or revelation, that "God is love," that affirmation implies that the constant intent of his action is to achieve perfection—that is to say, *he is holy*; and also that this perfection is achieved through beneficent altruism, and for a beneficent end—he is benevolent. Action fails to be, or express, love when either of these qualities is absent. It has abandoned the ideal, their ground and guaranty.

*Action which satisfies the requirements of its ideal is propitiation.* Its propitiatory character may be inconspicuous amid the harmonies of uncrossed love, or within self-imposed conditions. But when love is crossed, the realization of its ideal obstructed and baffled by complex conditions imposed by other and antagonizing forces, its purity traduced, its benevolence made the opportunity of selfishness, its conditioning action made to serve organized evil; and, above all, when it graciously seeks to conciliate and bless its self-debased foes, restoring them to the harmonies and realization of perfect being—it is then it demonstrates its propitiatory character by persistent devotion to its ideal, notwithstanding these obstructions.

The periodic overflow of the Nile has been for centuries the most marked condition to life and wealth for the swarming people of Lower Egypt. But this overflow has ever been supplied by the action of mysterious and long-hidden sources which satisfy an *imperative measure* of repletion in the solitudes of central Africa. Vainly did the idolatrous people seek to propitiate that "imperative

measure" with prayers to the mighty river when its hidden sources withheld their wonted action. Only these sources which by their action swelled the bosoms of Africa's silent lakes could propitiate that imperative condition. In the placid bosom of the lake is the heart-beat of the Nile. Is it less potent than where its pulsations burst its throbbing arteries in Lower Egypt? This mighty action which for hundreds of miles pours and storms with deliverance and wealth upon the famished lands is but the demonstration, amid obstacles and specific applications, of the peaceful but powerful action of those long-undiscovered lakes.

The wealth of the Nile may be made to serve oppression and degradation, yet its tides roll on, and will continue until the neglect and abuse of the blessings which it affords shall cease. Its beneficiaries will ultimately, through unselfish intelligence, recognize and honor the persistent propitiation which in distant solitudes affords these conditions of their well-being.

But this second class of conditions demands a more explicit consideration. These are those which are evolved by love, seeking to achieve the highest conditioned good in a perfect universe. Since one person cannot determine the character of another, but can only determine conditions upon which another may or must determine his own character, divine love's propitiation of the ideal for dependent persons can only consist in affording the conditions upon which they may realize their perfect being. Unlike the first condition, the ideal, which is a changeless imperative, this second class includes *changing* conditions which arise in the actions and relations through which the perfect universe is evolved. Since the evolution of love can be thought as striving only toward that which satisfies its ideal, its



action must be thought as providing only those conditions upon which free finite persons may actualize a perfect finite existence. Hence the questions :

*What is a perfect finite personality and universe? And what are the conditions requisite to a perfect finite personality and perfect universe?*

The first of these questions has been answered, in a former chapter, substantially thus: A perfect finite personality is a free and undisturbed progressive companionship of finite person with the Infinite Person; or progressive interaction of dependent with independent being. Analyzed, it is dependent persons who, within their conditions, have (1) the largest freedom to determine themselves; (2) perfect harmony with God; and (3) perfect security in this self-determined harmony.

1. As to freedom, it is scarcely necessary to say again that a universe can be known only as one of beings who are consciously other than the Creator; self-determining and therefore persons. But a perfect universe must be composed of persons whose power to determine themselves is the greatest possible to dependent beings, the largest freedom possible to dependent existence. Such freedom must be thought essential to the highest realization of finite personality, the highest conditioned good, the highest capability for their development of love in companionship with the Infinite.

2. Love implies universal harmony, the harmony of the dependent person with the conditions of his being which are posited by the Independent Person; and, as a consequence, the harmony of dependent persons with each other. This consequence follows from their common harmonization with the conditions of their being which are provided by divine love. *Love is the basis of universal adjustment.* Such perfect harmony is the first

and fullest reciprocation of love which is possible between all finite persons, and between them and God. It assures the right of a common devotion to ideal selfhood in each individual and to the realization of the ideal universe. Pure self-love implies the highest perfection of each in harmony with that of all; while selfishness, the right of none and the enemy of all, implies the degradation and ultimate destruction of all by universal disharmony. Universal harmony in reciprocation of divine love is essentially implied in a perfect universe.

3. Again, perfect finite personality, or a perfect universe, must be perfectly *secure* against disharmony, notwithstanding its widest freedom. A universe which is liable to discord and defection cannot be deemed perfect, does not realize perfect dependent being to its members, nor his ideal to its Creator. Nor can it assure undisturbed progress, but must embarrass the achieving of the highest conditioned good. The danger of discord which is incident to the freedom of dependent persons must be averted *without impairing that freedom*.

This security cannot be thought attainable by any necessitating measures; it must be achieved consistently with the largest freedom possible to dependent beings. But it must attain an improbability of defection so great as to be practically equivalent to an impossibility. This security, though not in the least degree the result of force or fate, must be practically equal to fate. Such is the moral assurance of harmony implied in the thought of perfect finite personality.

Motivity, not coercion, is the only means by which this security is attained. Susceptibility to motives of love, and positive aversion to motives of selfishness in any form, must be the elements of this security. These are the lines of eternal fortification against discord, the terms

of eternal reassurance to companionship between finite beings and the infinite. Since men are free in the sphere of conditioned self-determination, divine love can secure their reciprocation only by incitement, or, as we have termed it, motivity. By motivity we understand outer influence and inner susceptibility, each affecting the other; and both, as so affected, constituting motivity. Only by motives, and susceptibility or aversion thereto, can persons be influenced in the respects in which they are free. Only by means of these can their persistence in any given course be perpetually assured. We are perfectly sure that men will never feed upon stones, for the reason that they have no appetite, susceptibility, for stones; and that God will never be tempted to evil, since he is unsusceptible to such temptation. So, also, a universe of finite persons conditioned by permanent motivity to love and aversion to selfishness will abide in love's holy embrace evermore. In the realm of motivity, then, the holiness and goodness of free being is to be achieved and secured in whatever degree such achievement is possible.

If the natures of finite persons, which constitute one class of their conditions, were so fixed and unalterable as not to be susceptible to modification by their use or abuse of that nature, their harmony with the Creator's action might have been secured by the Creator's determination, just as their physical susceptibility assures that they will never attempt to feed upon stones. But in such a case their freedom would be nothing more than animal necessity, incapable of self-determined character. Hence, they would not be persons; hence, not able to realize an ideal personality.

Or if, having all the elements of personality, all persons were environed with external conditions which so fully manifest the truth, glory, and power of God as to preclude

the possibility of error—such, for example, as infants and idiots who pass from this life without probationary development are thought to enter upon—they might be thought to be practically secure. They might develop a love of God and a harmonization with their environment truly delightful; but they could never be conscious of unsusceptibility to selfishness, never conscious of a self-determined character secure in the exercise of the largest freedom of dependent personality; hence, could never realize a perfect finite personality nor a perfect universe.

Since, then, finite persons are free in their determination of what they shall be as to the use of their susceptibilities, and of what they will do as to their environment, it follows that their motivity is largely self-determined. That is to say, divine love cannot determine, but can only condition, that motivity which shall secure them in perfect harmony. Creating them persons self-determining—was to make them liable to disharmony. That liability is implicit in self-determination. But that self-determination is so conditioned that it is able to eliminate the liability to disharmony by determining in itself a susceptibility to love, and aversion to selfishness which can never be disturbed.

To afford the conditions upon which all dependent persons may determine their own perfection is, it is clear, the work of divine love. This work is love's devotement to the realization of the perfect finite person and the perfect universe—the *atoning fact*. If love's interaction with each dependent person is such as to favorably condition motivity to love; if to the erring and sinning, who have not yet chosen fixed antagonism to it, love evolves conditions to recovery from evil; and if upon these conditions dependent persons shall attain fixed motivity to good and aversion to evil, then does love successfully propitiate

the ideal in its evolution. This is *actual atonement* for sin.

But since harmony, freedom, and security are essential to perfection in a universe, it is evident that in evolving such universe the Creator goes to the greatest length in hemming himself about with conditions and obligations. In conditioning the finite perfection of dependent persons he enables them to condition his own action to the extent that, whatever they may determine in the use of themselves, he must maintain their existence and respect their freedom in working out such results as they determine in interaction with his activities in and around them. This is implied in the development of perfect finite freedom. This alone can afford the conditions upon which they may either rise to secure companionship with God or sink to self-determined destruction.

But we can easily see that the moral freedom of dependent persons which shall thus appropriate the benevolence of love may abuse, misappropriate, and pervert that benevolence, and thereby introduce disharmony and even disaster. By creating free persons the Creator has put it out of his own hands to prevent the rise of evil. One person can only *condition* another; that other, alone, can determine himself upon such conditions. The self-determining power of persons is power for evil as well as for good. They are able to pervert their nature and environment, and that is to pervert the action of their Creator, and thus make him the servitor of their iniquities. They are able to organize his activities which constitute their natural environment into vast sources and systems of sin and suffering—able to turn his benefits into inflictions of wrong upon each other. Moreover, as seen in former chapters, he must permit this abuse to run its course, or else he must shrink from the attempt to realize

his altruistic determination—must forego the bestowal of infinite benevolence—abandon the evolution of love. Thus the determination of perfect benevolence furnishes the conditions upon which finite self-determination can baffle benevolence, and set at naught holiness in the world. Unlike God's personal perfection, which is independently self-determined, the perfection of the universe must be determined eventually by all the persons who make up that universe. And this must be done upon the conditions which love evolves, however modified by the use or abuse which may be imposed thereon by the actions of finite persons.

These conditions being holy and benevolent in aim and tendency, love's evolution, to be unimpeached and untarnished, must be successful, however much of evil may arise in the process of realizing a perfect universe. Action which takes chances of disaster must, to be holy and beneficent, provide for either the prevention or remedy of such disaster. If it fail in this it is responsible for the disaster, and hence blameworthy; no matter how pure and benevolent the impulse which prompted the action. Hence, it is true that only love appears as the nature of action which can account for the existence of a personal universe. For love only can successfully evolve the conditions to perfect finite personality. Though it condition the possibility of evil it also conditions the remedy of evil; and this, too, without injustice to any being.

Since the self-determination of finite persons cannot be violated, but is in their own hands, yet the conditions to their self-perfecting must be afforded by the action which evolves their being, the following statement is clear: *Love's devotion to ideal finite being, individual and universal, propitiates the ideal by affording the conditions upon which dependent persons may achieve*

*perfect finite personality and determine a perfect universe.*

That justice cannot, but grace alone can, condition the development of a perfect universe has been shown in a former chapter. Enacting the perfect in the evolution of a universe love can contemplate nothing less than persons who may attain to the highest self-determination possible to dependent being; that they shall achieve this in accord with the universal right of self-love, and thereby realize universal harmony; and that they shall be able to attain security from all liability to discord or defection. Moreover, the practical realization of this ideal is the highest conditionable good; to bestow which is the benevolent purpose of love's evolution. All this is to say that the gracious evolution of love—an evolution beyond the limits of justice—conditions not only the rise, but the remedy, of evil. It thus conditions the realization of the perfect universe, and, hence, *propitiates the imperative ideal.*

The question, How does grace accomplish this? has been answered in outlining the problem of evil—substantially thus: The ideal finite person must be a progressive person; the progressive person must begin as an ignorant and feeble person; an ignorant and feeble person must be conditioned in grace; and gracious conditions are evolved by divine love's devotion to the realization of a perfect personal universe.

Dependent persons may thus settle for themselves and for all intelligent observers and associates the questions, doubts, and pretensions which ignorance or selfishness may have originated. They may settle them by demonstration of their deceptive and despicable nature; and may acquire an aversion and hatred toward selfishness that will render them forever unsusceptible to its temptations. On the other hand, by experience of love's

purifying, exalting, remedial grace they will apprehend it as the nature of perfect being, limitless in resource; and will acquire an ever-deepening susceptibility to infinite motives, the charm of the perfect. Thus they may demonstrate that love, perfectly holy and benevolent, is the nature of perfect self-determination; that in actualizing its ideals they have the open sesame to the highest determination of finite freedom and excellence; and that a holy God and a holy universe are the infinitely and only worthy modes of being. If love, subjected as it must be to the abuses, perversions, and conditions which finite freedom and evil can impose, shall nevertheless achieve successful conditions to universal susceptibility and devotion to the ideal, and aversion to selfishness and selfish motives, it will thereby realize a perfect universe—a universe of persons in harmonious articulation with the divine activities. And if, in the meantime, it shall have maintained the conditions of such motivity to *all persons* it will have propitiated the holy imperative of the ideal.

Action which should create a person or a universe of persons in the highest form of finite powers, not being able to remedy sin except by exercise of justice in the infliction of punishment, cannot render evil self-corrective, cannot inspire devotion to ideal personality; hence, cannot propitiate the authority of the perfect; and, hence, cannot make an atonement upon which sin could be forgiven or the sinner recovered to loving harmony with God. But the evolution of love, in a universe of progressive persons, because it maintains in each person the authority of the ideal, and affords him merciful conditions upon which to actualize an ideal self, can achieve ultimately perfect finite personality and a perfect universe. And because it can and does do this love's devotement to the ideal atones for all the evil which is incident to a



progressively self-determining universe. It atones to the ideal by maintaining the authority of that ideal, and by successfully conditioning its realization. It conditions the realization of its ideal, not by repressing, but by remedying, evil. It achieves security in the harmony of perfect finite freedom, not by eliminating freedom, but by conditioning the self-elimination of all susceptibility to the abuse of freedom, and by inciting universal devotion to the perfect. In a word, it discloses the nature of perfection and conditions a universal motivity to enact the perfect in respect of what persons should be and do.

The evolution of love, advancing in its eternal process of altruistic determination, *maintains the original unity of holiness and benevolence*, and assures the ultimate oneness of the ideal and actual universe. The holy, which is the quality of intentional perfection; and the good, which is the practical satisfaction of perfection; and benevolence; the bestowing of good, are perpetually at one. Neither moral impurity nor failure in benevolence appears in this process, although dependent persons may fill its bosom with unspeakable selfishness and wrong. No reconciliation is needed in love's action other than that which exists unbroken in the original and indivisible unity of the holy and the benevolent. This inviolable unity reconciles, in love, the amplest determination of benevolence with ideal holiness. Love is the unit which holds in reconciliation the factors of its evolution, the holy imperative of the ideal, and the limitless benevolence which affords the conditions for the realization of this ideal. The realization will be the universal oneness of the actual and the ideal. Love's devotement to the ideal, the atoning fact, is the power and pledge of that oneness. The implicit oneness of holiness and merciful benevolence in love becomes explicit in the ultimate oneness

of the actual and the ideal in the perfection of the universe.

*Thus God's devotement to the perfect* is the satisfying fact in the placid harmonies of the infinite consciousness, the propitiating fact in his relative consciousness amid the disharmonies of his abused and perverted mercies, the atoning fact in conditioning the recovery and security of the harmonies of a perfect universe. This most majestic fact upon which the eye of reason is permitted to gaze, love's devotement to its ideal, *is the atoning fact*. It realizes full determination only in action which is perfect—perfect in purpose, and unlimited in the benevolence which compasses that purpose—like a mighty river whose onward action, hedged, dammed-up, turned awry, conditioned, obstructed by abuse and perversion, rises, widens, and bears the universe on to a shoreless, fathomless perfection.

*The Agony of Love.*—This is that consciousness of *infinite offense* and *infinite solicitude* which is implied in conditioned effort to realize the ideal. Unconditioned action realizes perfection in itself; hence, in his unconditioned self-determination God cannot be thought conscious of solicitude or obstruction in realizing absolute perfection. But as the "Eternal Son," the *relative* consciousness in Deity, he must be thought conscious of offense and solicitude in his objective effort to evolve a perfect universe, conditioned and obstructed as his effort is by the perverse freedom of the persons who compose that universe. Hence, this offense and this solicitude must be recognized as among the implications of divine love in its evolution.

This solicitude thus offended is subject to be deepened into indefinite degrees of intensity by the perverse determinations of dependent persons whose perfecting is the

object of love's devotion. The Creator's activities, put forth to condition the development of dependent persons, may be so baffled and perverted as to defer for indefinite ages the object of his devotement. The degradation and sorrow also of his children which must result from this disharmony must vastly enhance the anguish of love's devotion to their highest good. Hence, love, in this evolution, must experience that which in human experience and human language is *agony*. Though we may not affirm that God suffers actual pain, we must recognize divine love as being in that attitude which to human love is the very rack of anguish. *And if in any event this divine consciousness comes to be expressed through the medium of human nature it must be an agonising revelation.*

The sense of infinite offense and solicitude must be borne until the actual universe shall realize its ideal; until love's devotion to the ideal is crowned with universal success. Until then the activities of divine love are subject to abuse and perversion, which baffle and retard the practical realization of the end to which it is devoted. This devotement is subject —

1. To *possibility* of the rise of error, selfishness, and suffering in the world.
2. To the actual existence and world-wide prevalence of sin and suffering.
3. Moreover, these activities of divine love are subject to their being made to coöperate with sin and sorrow, and afford scope and power for their domination.
4. Selfishness arises in rivalry with love and usurps its throne in the human heart.
5. The good of being is for ages abridged, well-nigh displaced by actual evil; and,
6. There is ultimately a final rejection of love's effort in the incorrigible, which love can remedy only by con-

ditioning the self-defeat, perhaps self-extinction, of the conscious sinner.

All these facts and considerations, while they do not tarnish the divine purity or exhaust love's benevolence, constitute subjection to *offense* and *solicitude*, and, hence, agony to love. Although love so conditions these abuses and perversions with corrective, remedial, and exalting tendencies, yet they condition love, (1) offend its purity and (2) obstruct its benevolence; hence, they must be thought as of unspeakable *offense* and *agony* to love. Although the Creator might, in the exercise of arbitrary justice, destroy each sinner, and thus forego the development of finite character to a higher type than force or fear could incite, although God might have chosen to dwell in unalloyed bliss, infinite rapture, without creating a universe, yet this conclusion abides unmoved: His nature, love, conscious of the beneficence of love-determined being, conscious of love's infinite resource, conscious that love requires a universe of persons to actualize its ideal objective life, has created a world of free persons who can know and feel and reciprocate his love; hence, able to reject, revile, and abuse that love. Love can manage these only by surrounding them with conditions of mercy. This management is, therefore, subject to ages of the continuance of evil, and this continuance imposes ages of antagonism, offense, and practical subjection which condition and, therefore, agonize love. Hence, it is evident that love's choice to create a universe of persons is the choice to accept the vast cycle of agony which it must undergo on account of error, sin, and sorrow which it must permit; all for the sake of lavishing endless beneficence upon finite persons.

Perhaps sin and sorrow could have been avoided by creating a universe of a low order—and thus love's

agony avoided; but such could not be love's universe. It might have served to display divine power and maintain divine supremacy undisputed, but it could never achieve divine companionship, never be worthy of divine love. Could love in any way dissolve the original unity of holiness and benevolence and still maintain its own existence as devotement to the perfect, it might avoid its agony. But since it is what it is, it *must agonize* until devotement to the perfect is assured throughout the personal universe. Devotement to the ideal, which is the bond of reconciliation throughout the entire evolution of love, the bond which holds an ignorant, sinful, and suffering world in the arms of a holy benevolence until it shall develop its own security in holy freedom—*this all-reconciling devotement is the agonizing factor in love.*

If in the exercise of their self-determination God's children abuse his beneficence by making it an occasion for selfish satisfaction in sin of every kind, it would cause no regret in him if his love were without devotion to the perfect, without the quality of holiness. But because love is devotion to the perfect, and, therefore, has the quality of holiness, such abuse of his beneficence results in agony to love. Hence, in order to carry out the greatest benevolence, perfect altruism in ideal finite being, by abiding holy it must continue to agonize. This is the agony of devotement. This is the sphere in which the intense strain between the ideal and the actual appears.

Devotement to the ideal, the perfect, is unswervingly true. That ideal demands ever-enlarging benevolence toward the erring and the selfish in order to its realization, by their correction, redemption, and perfecting. This larger benevolence is, in turn, appropriated by sinners as opportunity for further, wider, vaster evil. The discrepancy between the actual and the ideal world becomes

a breach, the breach becomes a chasm, the chasm an antagonism. The actual world is at war with love's ideal and with the forces which condition the world's existence and perfecting. Yet love's devotement must enlarge its benevolence to circumvent that antagonism; must multiply benefits to its enemies, give them standing room, fighting room, supply them with the instruments of their warfare, replenish their commissariat, and still offer them amnesty, pardon, fellowship, eternal companionship. All this ever-widening benevolence it gives that they may perceive its excellence, may find incitement and opportunity to recover from selfishness, and that sin may defeat itself, either in the sinner's self-loathing and renunciation of sin or by means of his incorrigible self-degradation and perhaps entire loss of moral freedom and personality. Thus—through ages upon ages, baffled, abused, perverted, apparently defeated, its activities turned against itself, helplessly supporting sin by lovingly maintaining the existence of sinners, meeting greater emergencies with greater mercies, yet unswerving in devotion to the ideal, hence atoning to the ideal—love's atonement is an atonement of agony.

*This is not the agony of correction;* for that would imply fault and dependence in divine love. It is not the agony of penalty; for that would imply its moral degradation. It is not the agony of defeat; for that would be its surrender. It is an agony which persists because the quality and efficiency of the agonist are self-maintained, unimpaired. Because its quality and efficiency can and do abide in unwavering devotion to the ideal, throughout the process of evolving a perfect universe, it successfully atones. Because unimpaired in quality it can afford to maintain the attitude of forgiveness, and is efficient to achieve the recovery of the erring and sinning

ones. It atones in providing conditions for the ultimate harmony and security of dependent persons in the largest finite freedom. It is the one fact in which love evinces to finite minds its infinite sufficiency to await the determination of its ideal, notwithstanding the most difficult conditions which the largest freedom of a conditioned universe can interpose.

The benevolent father who sees his benevolence made the opportunity and instrument of crime and shame by his son would experience no agony if he were indifferent to moral purity and honor in himself or his son. But because he is a pure as also a benevolent father he is agonized by seeing this abuse of his benevolence. And while his love for his boy cannot turn that boy from his wickedness in any way, except by greater lenience to render that wickedness corrective, and provide that it shall have the least disastrous result, it must be to himself a cause of inexpressible agony. But because of this very agony, which is at once the exponent of his purity, his benevolence, and his son's turpitude, he is in the best possible position to forgive and help, and ultimately recover, his wayward son. It is this agony that evinces to the son the ill desert of his sin, and that his repentance will meet with forgiveness and be moral uplifting to him. This agony could be avoided in either of two ways: by abandoning either his child or his moral purity. Either would be the defeat of love.

*If an ideal family government* were the type of government in our thought when characterizing our view of the atonement we should unhesitatingly term it a governmental theory. But the "governmental theory," so termed, is so cumbered with the crudities of civic forms and political preconceptions that, to avoid misunderstanding, we prefer to term it the *parental theory*.

*Sacrifice.*—This is necessarily implied in the evolution of love. In choosing to bestow the greatest good of finite personal existence, by conditioning a world of persons, love places itself in a position where it is subject to agony. This agony, thus willingly assumed by love that it may bestow the highest good possible to a dependent universe, is its sacrifice, *because undeserved*. God might have chosen to dwell in no mode of consciousness lower than the unalloyed enjoyment of his infinitely perfect egoism. Or, he might have chosen in his perfect altruistic freedom to create a universe of persons in the highest possible degree of finite intelligence and power, to be dealt with upon the conditions of arbitrary right and justice; each person being destroyed in the first inception of selfishness; each sinner thus suffering his own ill desert. The moral purity of the Creator or of the universe might thus have been maintained without agony or sacrifice on the part of God. But this, as we have seen, could not realize a world of dependent persons of higher type than force and fear could incite; hence, not a world capable of highest good, not an ideal world, *not love's world*. But since it is in love that God has chosen to create persons who shall have the greatest freedom possible to dependent beings, in order that they may realize the greatest good possible to dependent personal existence, and since he maintains the conditions requisite to such realization through his agonizing devotement, and since this agony is imposed by the free abuse of these conditions by dependent persons, it is clear that this agony is not deserved by love, but is a gracious sacrifice which it makes to achieve their perfection and to bestow upon them the resulting good. Hence we may say that love's agony is undeserved, (1) because God is under no obligation to create other persons; and he gains nothing to



himself by creating them, as it is not requisite to the perfection of independent being, but is chosen in perfect freedom. (2) Having chosen to create, he imposes upon himself the obligation to be just, only. He is under no obligation to secure to created beings a larger degree of good than that which will compensate them for such inconvenience or ill as may be naturally incident to their type of being. (3) But having chosen, from motives of love, to create and condition a world which, in order to achieve the greatest possible good to his creatures, imposes upon him the agony of atonement, *that choice is a choice of agony*. Choosing agony as the path to the limitless good of others, others whose existence contributes nothing to his own perfection, *is the unspeakable sacrifice of love*.

The evolution of love in the personal universe is but a process of positing conditions. Upon these conditions dependent persons rise into being and determine their destiny. Love, in its evolution, constantly holds out the conditions to greatest good to all, and persistently widens and deepens them that it may afford conditions to the ultimate perfection of the most lowly and vile. Persistently does it support the purest and most aspiring with conditions to yet higher attainment. In all this, love places the determination of its evolution in the hands of the creatures whom it conditions. If they so determine the evolution will be rapid and upward; if they determine otherwise it will be slow and degrading, taking wide, tortuous, and agonizing detour to afford conditions by which to possess a promised land which might have been reached by a short and direct route. To voluntarily place the determinations for which one is ultimately responsible in the hands of others is the very essence of sacrifice. Its determination is thus placed in their hands when

love's evolution, which posits gracious conditions for their holiness and good, is subjected to the wrong and abuse to which it is perverted by a race of sinners; and this must be until the self-correction and self-defeat of sin constrain them to acknowledge its perfect excellence. When love's objective action submits to be conditioned by every error and sin of each member of a world of sinners, and its grand aim is, without right or reason, deferred, baffled, and antagonized by their freedom, which love sacredly respects and upholds, its entire evolution is an unspeakable sacrifice. When each error is a check, and each sin a grief, to love's devotement to the perfection and highest good of all, the determination of that perfection and good is sustained in agony; and that agony is an agony of sacrifice.

That all this is involved in the original project of a universe does not change the sacrificial character of love's evolution, but enhances the benevolent motive by so much as this sacrifice was known to be inevitable to carry out that motive. Through this cycle of sin, shame, insult, and perversion love proves a ready and able interaction with the recalcitrant sinner, nation, world—to forgive, cleanse, and reform whenever either or all so determine. Its flame burns only to warm, cheer, and mature them; though they, by their free but false adjustment to it, make it a torture. Yet love endures this vast sacrifice in order that when they relent it may be able to recover and save them. Is love benevolent, its beneficence is made the instrument of malice by sinners. Is love gracious, that graciousness is made the occasion for vast schemes of injustice. Is love holy, that holiness is made the pretext for oppression. Is love true, that truth is clipped and carved into lies. Is love beautiful, that beauty is made the decoy of lust. Is love pleasurable, sin drugs

that pleasure with misery. On the altar of an *ideal universe* every quality of divine love quivers in sacrifice, because the high priest of the universe is devoted to the realization of that holy ideal.

By this sacrifice the authority of the ideal over the actual is maintained, for the world and for each finite person in their respective conditions. And the unity of the ideal and the actual is assured in the ultimate development. The existence of error, sin, and sorrow is compatible with divine purity and benevolence, because love endures this sacrifice in order that wrong and sin may be self-correcting, self-defeating, and self-exhausting; and that sorrow may be made self-compensating by the chastening and disciplining office to which it is conditioned by love.

*Vicariousness*, or substitution, is also implied in the atoning agony of love. The agony which love endures displaces the suffering which sinners must, upon conditions of justice, endure as the result of their selfishness. The *unrestrained result of selfishness* is the correct idea of punishment. Hence, it is correct to say that the punishment of sin is displaced by the agony of love which is endured in maintaining merciful conditions for the recovery of sinners. This agony is caused by sin; but this sin, without the merciful conditions to which this agony is incident, would, instead, cause hopeless punishment to the sinner. Hence, the agony of love is a true substitute, vicarious agony, for the hopeless disaster which would justly result to every sinner. Instead of sinners being abandoned to the selfish course which they have chosen, and to the sufferings of which it must be the cause, mercy affords conditions for pardon and recovery from it; and gives chastening effect to the ills which they may have already incurred. The agony thus incident to a "cove-

nant of grace," love's devotion to the perfect, can fail as a substitute for sin's result only in the case of the sinner who ultimately ignores it, tramples upon it as though it were "an unholy thing."

Thus the agonizing devotement to the perfect which maintains the original unity of action and ideal, in all the evolution of conditions to a personal universe, reconciles the amplest development of benevolence with the imperative behests of holiness, and bounds the vast sea of evil with a "ministry of reconciliation." The evolution of love discloses:

1. *An absolute authority*, the sacred imperative of the perfect, based on the perfect nature of God.

2. *The propitiation of that authority*, by devotement to the perfect in all love's action which conditions finite being.

3. *The agony of love*, in its consciousness of infinite offense, by reason of its *submission* to the free and full demonstration of evil, and of infinite solicitude for the sinning.

4. *Sacrifice*, in undergoing this submission and agony *undeserved*.

5. *Vicariousness*, in that its agony displaces disaster which would justly result to sinners by their own action.

Thus, stripped of fictitious statements, symbolic forms, and modes of revealment, *love's devotement to the perfect*, agonizing because conditioned by evil, is an atonement for the existence of evil, in that it maintains *the holy* as the changeless and universal law of intentions, and is a ransom for sinners, in that it affords conditions upon which they find recovery, and the imperfect develop perfection, by observing this law. *It is the atoning fact.*

## CHAPTER V

### THE REVELATION OF THE ATONING FACT

The great problem is to restore to the human mind something of the ideal.—*Victor Hugo.*

THE revelation of atonement is our next movement in outlining the evolution of love. An exhaustive view of this revelation would constitute a complete Christology. But it is sufficient to the present purpose to briefly indicate two things, namely:

1. The *occasion* for a revelation of atonement.
2. The fact of such revelation *in Jesus Christ.*

The occasion, or need, for a revelation of atoning fact must be regarded as being a state of human conditions which demands a supernatural intervention by divine love, in order to make good to man those conditions which did *originally* and *naturally* afford the basis of human faith and love. The main facts naturally constituting those conditions to faith and love are these: being, dependence, self-love, reason, conscience, and self-determining power, or will. We have seen in a former chapter that men may debase their natural conditions by abuses. This may be done to an extent that will obscure, perhaps obliterate, the facts upon which human faith can arise. Abuses willfully and wickedly practiced by one person may corrupt the conditions of a family or neighborhood. The sins of a generation become the debasing tendencies of succeeding generations who, though less guilty, may become more gross, materialistic, and brutal. Rejection of the ideal and devotion to the actual self is a brutelike life; and the tendency of it is to render man

unsusceptible to spiritual motives. It increases his desire for material good and pleasure, and impairs his faith in spiritual interests. Spiritual development depends upon faith in the unseen, the ideal perfections; and, hence, is impracticable when the implied facts in which faith confides are obscured by that abuse of perceived facts which makes them objects of covetousness and brutality. Thus, eventually, the authority, the need, and the means of an ideal life become obscured from those who, under better conditions, would sincerely follow and appropriate them. Persons and communities who by reason of superior position and power can elevate or depress their fellow men place in jeopardy, by selfish abuses, the ultimate welfare of these fellow beings. Keeping the "key of knowledge," they refuse to enter and prevent those who would. Thus it is possible to debase the conditions of finite life until they are not only abnormal, but wholly preternatural. In this situation what course must the evolution of divine love be thought to take? Love, must, as a matter of justice, do one of two things, either permit these debased conditions which human wickedness and weakness have established, to work the immediate destruction of mankind, or, in mercy, *reassert and maintain* the conditions to human perfection by supernatural intervention. The former would be to surrender the object of the universe; the latter would be to uphold it by a farther evolution of love. It is not, indeed, a question of what love *can* do, but what love as an objective determination *must* and *will* do. When human perversity misappropriates the benevolence of love by making it the opportunity for selfishness, and prosperous selfishness encourages the conviction that the creation is favorable, or at least indifferent, to it, or when resulting adversity begets despair, what manifestation does the evolution of love imply? This is

the whole question; and there can be but one reply: *The Supernatural*.

A great poet seems also a philosopher in such sentences as these: "The great problem is to restore to the human mind something of the ideal"; "The ideal, stable type of ever-moving progress"; "The ideal, to this summit God descends, man rises." An ancient poet, who acknowledged his deep trouble from having observed the prevalence and prosperity of the wicked, found relief when he paid his devotions at the shrine of ideal perfection. He says:

When I thought to know this,  
It was too painful for me;  
Until I went into the sanctuary of God;  
Then understood I their end.

These poets, living amid the most civilized and influential peoples of their day, perceived the human need of something to preserve the conditions of moral recuperation, but did they recognize the method by which it must be disclosed?

As the development of human selfishness advanced, becoming more expanded, complex, and intense, and more powerful to dominate human destiny, the test of love's ability to maintain its recognition in the human consciousness became more strenuous.

It would be in the order of our outline to note the stages of this process, and to emphasize the points in human history at which darker-growing phases of human depravity have evoked brighter supernatural manifestations of love. Especially would it be pertinent to distinguish the points in human history where the natural manifestations of divine love which afford the facts upon which faith is based have been eclipsed or wholly perverted by their abuse; and where supernatural reveal-

ments became the method of love's effort to afford conditions to faith among men. But as other portions of this work sufficiently suggest these points they will not be considered here.

It is sufficient to note, for example, that human history has been largely determined with reference to facts which did not exist at the time of such determination, but were supernaturally furnished to those who acted upon them and assigned these facts as the data of the religious and political institutions which they founded and maintained. The knowledge of these unborn facts and persons, though it could not have been gathered from existing data, was given in the form of *prophecy*. Its object was to afford conditions, especially incitements, to the conduct, at the time, of those to whom it was revealed. A distinguished illustration of history which has been determined upon conditions of this supernatural form is seen in the present existence, fortunes, and characteristics of the Hebrew people. It is undeniable, also, that the central meaning of their prophecies and history has been the Messianic, or Christ, idea. It has been their blessing or bane accordingly as toward it they have been faithful or recreant. That the prophecies sought in all cases to promote faith toward God and righteousness is not questioned. That they were of supernatural origin they professed. That this profession was valid the history and present facts confirm.

The Christian peoples of the earth, numbering about five hundred millions of souls, with institutions and resources of unequalled quality, power, and benevolence, *can give no adequate account*, though it has often been attempted, of their rise and progress, their civilization, and the superior character of their institutions upon wholly natural conditions. The central force in the con-



ditions upon which their progress has been determined is, undeniably, the Christ. And this central force is wholly unaccountable except from the supernatural disclosure and authentication of divine atonement by Jesus of Nazareth.

To say that these most influential movements in human history to afford common conditions to the people for individual purity and progress in personal character cannot be accounted for without the aid of supernatural data is the same as to say, *that divine love has resorted to supernatural means* to avert the hopeless decay of faith, and the destruction of humanity; and to do this has thus reestablished the conditions to faith and love. And all this is equivalent to saying that these conditions, as naturally given, have been so obscured at times as to establish occasions when divine love must supernaturally intervene; and, further, that the *supreme crisis* in the existing conditions to human determination was the occasion for the revelation of atonement by the Christ.

It was as though not only the natural, but the supernatural, evolution of love which had afforded the conditions to human faith in past history had been thoroughly perverted. The people who had enjoyed the most advanced supernatural evolution of love, fitting them to lead the human race in the righteous determination of personal character, had abused these conditions, had become thoroughly mercenary and oppressive. Priest and teacher had, by covetousness, "altogether gone out of the way"; had become politically and religiously devoted to temporal things, instead of making temporal things subserve an ideal life. The Roman empire, which now dominated the civilized world, had become the foe of the ideal and the devotee of the actual. "The creature rather than the Creator" was the object of their devotement.

Though the Stoic bewailed it, the state and the people were Epicurean. A few held that the life, but the many and the powerful held that to possess the pleasures of life, was the chief good. It was as though a benignant father had lavished treasure and care upon wayward children, which implied his solicitude for their reformation and love; had gone even further and declared in words what his gifts had implied, his plans, his powers, and his wish for their highest welfare; and had forewarned them of disaster. But at last, when care and treasures, promises and warnings, had exhausted their power to lead them to repentance, the inner, but infinite, solicitude of love burst forth in an agony of tears and blood. It was divine love's sense of the infinite enormity of sin, and of infinite solicitude for a world of sinners, which when disclosed to the human consciousness of Jesus revealed itself through him to the world in the anguished appeal of Gethsemane and Calvary.

*The Fact of Such Revelation in Christ.*—We come now to consider that most conspicuous declaration of divine love which had hitherto arisen in human history.

The Christ idea seems to have been one of the oldest ideas in possession of the human race. It seems to have been held, in some form or other, by so many tribes and nations, ancient and modern, that it is a question whether any tribe of men has been without it in legend, song, or story. Its dim outline haunts the mists of prehistoric times; and, though floating like a distorted wraith far back in unchronicled ages, it holds a weird identity apart from the myths which mingle there in shadowy indistinctness.

Whether it be regarded as a reflected consensus of human need in all ages, or the more or less corrupted form of a revelation given to the first of our race, its

most distinguishing characteristic is that the Christ is both divine and human. Trace the idea wherever you will through legend or myth or in the Pentateuch, the Hebrew prophets and songs, or the teachings of Jesus himself, or those of the apostles, and you are ever confronted with the "Son of God" and the "Son of Man." Out from this manifold two faces ever look upon you; one so highborn that it screens its majesty within the other, which, in turn, yields itself to give human expression to the divine.

The Sacred Scriptures have a clear meaning when regarded as chiefly a human record of the Messianic revelation of love made by the Creator. Our view is, simply, that the divine personality in the Christ is the Creator, the "Only Begotten," "the Eternal Son," the true and living God, according to his relative mode of self-determination. This relative self-determination in God is distinctly set out in the chapter entitled "Being, as Conditioned"; hence, need not be further defined here.

The human being, Jesus, we regard as a creation, a "second Adam"; a person who, in his distinctly human self-determination, maintained a sinless life in faithful subjection to, and loving interaction with, his Creator; in the same sense in which man in his original state did, or was intended to do. Moreover, in his harmony with this interaction and along the line of its development, there came to him the privilege of becoming the interpreter of the subjective consciousness of divine love; not only the perfectly interacting companion, but the embodiment and expression of the divine consciousness, the Creator, in the same sense that he was the embodiment and expression of his human consciousness.

We have said "it became his privilege" to have the divine consciousness, his privilege to interpret to man

the subjective consciousness of divine love. In saying this we do not forget that he was created for this very purpose. Nor do we know that any human being, in the purity and accuracy of an untarnished nature, might not have become a similar interpreter. Yet there was found among men no other "arm to save." But we must not forget that he was entirely self-determining, as a man; that, as such, he determined his human character without sin; and that his interpreting the divine consciousness was by the consent of his human volition. "He offered himself unto God."

The gospel records contain a record of the life, teachings, and acts of Jesus, as the Christ; and if we regard these as records of a movement in the evolution of love their true meaning and the secret of their world-wide dominance will appear. They are simple memoirs of words and acts which have remodeled civilization and directed the current of human history for nearly nineteen centuries, and are rapidly increasing in potency.

The prevalence and prominence of the Christ idea in ancient thought naturally gave rise to pretenders to Messiahship. We have sacred and secular records of very early and frequent claims of this kind. Indeed, history and poetry abound with the claims of mighty heroes whose success encouraged, and popular adulation flattered, them into either the pretense or belief that they were demigods. Alexander the Great, it is said, sought to make this claim. If so, he was among the later warriors who have claimed the double nature. But many among religious teachers had appeared. Indeed, the general expectancy of a Messiah which prevailed in the civilized world in the times of the Cæsars seemed to beget a mania for Messianic pretensions. Because of this state of things some writers have jumped to the conclusion that

Jesus was simply one of these pretenders. But such a conclusion implies, certainly, a very superficial view of the case; and these writers seem merely to have "lost their heads" amid the abundant and curious information on this subject. The widely extended knowledge of the Christ idea, and the widely felt need of authoritative or other valid teaching in both religion and philosophy, together with the general undertone of dissatisfaction with Rome, had, doubtless, intensified this expectancy. But the widely diffused knowledge of the Jewish Scriptures, and the notorious Jewish expectation of a deliverer, had already reduced the vagary of public opinion to the accuracy which conceded that "salvation is of the Jews." Hence, an appeal to the Jewish Scriptures found the original stock of prophecy and promise, which, by force of its antiquity, and its logical and ethical coherency, is manifestly that which had *founded* the idea, the literature and general expectancy, as well as afforded the basis of all the corruptions and false pretensions which have clustered around the Messiahship.

*The identification of the Christ* naturally became a question of great importance, in view of the rise of so many pretenders, and the alacrity with which the expectant people took up with them. Skepticism regarding the Messianic claim had also become well developed among the thoughtful and educated. But an appeal to the written records of the promises and prophecies was the ready means of escape from myth and sham. Saint Paul, in the opening of his Epistle to the Romans, recognizes that in announcing himself as an apostle of Jesus he will raise the question in the minds of the people at Rome, "How are we to know that the Messianic claims of Jesus are genuine?" He squarely anticipates and answers this question in the outset, by stating that Jesus is identi-

fied as the true Messiah, or Christ, in both the *human* and *divine* natures of Messiahship; that in the human department he is shown by the concurrence of prophecy to be the chosen of the house of David; and in the divine nature designated as the Son of God by the exercise of divine power in his resurrection from the dead. These statements evince the alertness which existed regarding this question of true Messianic identity; and also of the methods and standards by which it must be decided. The Messianic records made the requisite characteristics so minute that it was impossible that more than one claimant could meet their requirements. They unfold a vast series of facts, beginning with the announcement of a Redeemer to Adam and ending with Malachi's vision of the rising "Sun of righteousness" with healing in his beams. So full, so minute, though incompatible with human anticipation, were the facts predicted of the Messiah that one has truly said, "By a change of tenses prophecy may in many cases be turned into biography, and so peculiarly that in Jesus only, of all the human race, can the lines of Messianic promise meet." The *family*, *time*, and *place* of his advent are given by different prophets, in different ages and countries, but concur in their fulfillment in such manner as has designated the "Babe of Bethlehem" of the family of David, at the appointed time, the beginning of the dissolution of Judah's nationality. In the gospels Jesus is identified at his birth as chosen for the Messiahship, so definitely as to leave no possible ground for the pretensions of any other. His being a special creation, "a second Adam," untainted by racial evil, is not only stated as fact, but emphasized by circumstantial and collateral facts. To anyone who accepts the Messianic records these external designations of Jesus, as the true Christ, are conclusive.

But to all, of any faith, Jesus evinced *internal* evidence that his life, teachings, and acts *marked an advance* in the evolution of divine love in its effort to furnish conditions to human faith in love's ideal life. And this is the same as to say that he was identified as the Son of God.

As a man, his faith was perfect. That is to say, he perfectly subjected his actual life to the ideal, and consequently actualized an ideal manhood. He is regarded to-day as, indisputably, the one perfect man of all history. In him self-love, devotion to the actualization of an ideal self, is complete—without a taint of selfishness. Thus he maintained perfectly harmonious interaction with his Creator, and was, consequently, holy, harmless, undefiled. Inasmuch as truth is the theoretic which may be explicated from the ideal, his was a true life in every aspect and relation which he held. Thus he illustrated the evolution of love in its human conditions. Further, on this, we quote a paragraph from Professor Fisher's *Manual of Christian Evidences*: "The character of Jesus as it is depicted in the Evangelists is one of unequalled excellence. This is universally admitted. It is not a character made up of negative virtues alone, where the sole merit is the absence of culpable traits. It has positive, strongly marked features. It combines piety, an absorbing love and loyalty to God, with philanthropy, a love to men without any alloy of selfishness, and too strong to be conquered by their injustice and ingratitude. It unites thus, in perfect harmony, the qualities of the saint and of the philanthropist. It blends holiness with compassion and gentleness. There is no compromise with evil, no consent to the least wrongdoing, even in a friend or follower. But with this purity there is a deep well of tenderness, a spirit of forgiveness which never fails.

With the active virtues, with an intrepidity that quailed before none, however high in station and public esteem, there are connected the passive virtues of patience, forbearance, meekness. The world beholds in Jesus its ideal of goodness."

And this from Lecky (History of European Morals) : "It was reserved for Christianity to present to the world an ideal character, which through all the changes of eighteen centuries has inspired the hearts of men with an impassioned love, has shown itself capable of acting on all nations, ages, temperaments, and conditions, has been not only the highest pattern of virtue, but the strongest incentive to its practice, and has exercised so deep an influence that it may be truly said that the simple record of three short years of active life has done more to regenerate and soften mankind than all the disquisitions of philosophers and all the exhortations of moralists."

But in addition to the ideal human character of Jesus there was manifested by him a class of actions which he himself professed were the action of the "Son of God"; and these were actions which were recognized as at least superhuman by all who witnessed them.

*Rationalism* has sought to dispute the supernatural character of these actions; apparently blind to the inconsistency of supposing a person of mental and moral accuracy professing their supernatural, their divine, origin if such they were not. But rationalists, in their efforts to account for Christ and Christianity without admitting the supernatural, have successfully shown up each other's failures and have neutralized one another's theories. For example, Baur exploded Strauss's theory of myth, and Strauss exposed the failure and evasion of Baur's historical theory; while Renan's romancing was a mere para-



site of Strauss's theory, and perished with that theory. The mutual neutralization of rationalistic theories is the grand outcome of rationalism.

This self-exposed failure of rationalists may be thus summed up:

1. It is conceded that its writers have not adhered to the records.
2. They have failed to explain the moral and religious revolution produced by Christianity.
3. Their solution of the person of Christ is inadequate.
4. They fail to account for the Christ idea.
5. They fail to replace to the heart the power of the gospel.
6. They were forced to abandon the Christian idea of God and adopt that of deism or pantheism. (After Christlieb.)

Later rationalistic attempts, especially in Great Britain and America, have been in the nature of efforts to gather up and revive the shattered remains of German failures. A few magazine writers, novelists, and lecturers, probably unaware of the true line of living issues, have patched together the rags of worn-out and cast-off German failures, and have strutted in what they have conceived to be an array of "advanced thought."

Perceptions, intuitions, judgments, affections, and volitions which must have been divine made him, with his consent and coöperation, their interpreter to the world. Along the line of this subjection of his nature to God these divine actions were put forth. They superseded his human need of learning, answered the queries and silenced the arguments of the learned, and compelled all to recognize him as a perfect teacher, though he had never been a pupil, but always a master among men. He read the inner thoughts and intentions of men as an open

book. If there were nothing else to mark the divine intelligence in his teachings the wonderful foresight of his conceptions would be sufficient. They teach an inner character and outer practice for man toward which humanity has been growing for over eighteen centuries, but has not yet reached. All must admit that when civilization shall realize these teachings the "golden age," the ideal age, will have been attained. His insight rejected the methods by which the wisest of men have sought success. He adopted methods which, in the eyes of human wisdom, stamped him as a weakling and coward, but are now seen to have been dictated by foresight of the only possible conditions to universal and perpetual dominion—the dominion of ideal being, the ideal universe.

*Miracles* were a class of his actions to which he referred his critics as proof that the Creator was revealed in him. The *object* of this class of actions was, first, to enable men to identify their author as the Creator; secondly, to place men in possession of the fact that the nature of the Creator is love—that the Creator is a merciful Saviour. This was done in miracles which were purely physical; then in physico-spiritual miracles in which diseases were healed and sins forgiven. Thus in physical miracles was begun a progressive system of divine revelation which passed from physical miracles to physico-spiritual, and thence to the purely spiritual manifestation of divine love as a purifying agent in the human affections.

The possession by sincere men of these two facts, the personal Creator and Saviour, gave them the conditions of recovery from selfishness, and of return to companionship with God. The sincere were conscious of the need of access to the actualized ideal, the perfect. The actually perfect One was revealed in these two facts; and thus his

sacred authority was reasserted to them. Moreover, the means of recovering devotement to the ideal by accepting the Creator as also a Saviour was placed within their reach. To settle, for the people, then and there, the fact of the Creator wielding the forces of nature, and the fact that the Creator is a God who saves from sin by means of love, settled for them the foundation of "faith unto salvation."

When his followers should be sufficiently weaned from the actual and wooed to the ideal life which he kept constantly before them by word and deed; when, in other words, their hopes were turned from the formal to the spiritual, they would not need the continuance of physical miracles. Their faith would then be made to grasp the purely spiritual reality of God and his love; and a work greater than physical miracles would result to their spiritual experience, restoring them to conscious harmony with the Creator. Upon this purely spiritual phenomenon all that makes Christianity worth preserving has been propagated. It contains in it the facts of God as Creator and Saviour, self-dependent, holy, and benevolent. It is the restoration to man of ideal being actualized in God and actualized in Jesus and actualizable by man.

*The gradual* manifestation of divine consciousness in Jesus is to be noted. Doubtless such manifestation to those among whom he worked was needful for them; and it is a natural inference that as God thus gradually unfolded love's supernatural declaration to men, through him, his consciousness of God in himself should be gradually developed.

The mysteriousness of our spiritual nature is, of course, acknowledged on all hands, yet the fact of our conscious being is the first, broadest, and surest knowledge we have. Although we are "most ignorant" of the mode

“of what we are most assured,” as a fact, yet the significance of the facts it reveals to us cannot be slighted because we do not understand the mode in which they subsist.

Consciousness gives the knowledge of these facts; and as we become conscious of these facts we recognize and act upon them as our own selfhood. The rise of this selfhood is gradual and systematic. It is a self-conscious unit, gradually becoming conscious of its own powers and susceptibilities. From the dawn of conscious sensation we progress into the consciousness of perception, comparison, reason, emotion, self-determination, and moral consciousness. Thus gradually different phases of consciousness arise within us, as occasions in and around us call them into exercise. They arise, not one after another, by abrupt divisions, but rather running into, gradually superinducing and overlapping, one another; one in process of arising while another is definitely exercised; some gradually affording the occasion for the gradual rise of others. While they are simply different classes of action of which the one person becomes conscious, yet these actions are so distinct in our consciousness of them that they are severally termed orders, or forms, of consciousness. But when so designating them we do not profess to understand the *modes* of their subsistence or differentiation, but we simply and unavoidably recognize, and act in pursuance of them as facts of which man gradually becomes conscious. In the same sense, when we speak of the divine consciousness in Christ, it is not an attempt to explain the mode of its subsistence with the human person in whom the divine consciousness arose, but we simply and unavoidably recognize the gradual development of divine self-consciousness in him and the manifestation of divine powers and susceptibilities by him.

Psychologically, it seems only a question whether the Creator, whose action constitutes our nature and sustains the conditions upon which our own personal activity arises, may not himself act *volitionally* also, as we do upon and through this same nature. Let it not be forgotten that what we term our "natural powers" are simply the action of our Creator, of which he is perfectly conscious. The spontaneous rise of self-determinating action upon these natural powers is the rise of our personal selves, the ego whom we call *I*, who acts upon and through these natural powers. The use of these powers is our own personal action; and it is only in their use that we become aware of them. This use is our interaction with the Creator; and our consciousness, in whatever form it may be, sensation, perception, comparison, reason, emotion, or will, is simply our knowledge of our part of this interaction. Now, there is no ground upon which we can deny or doubt that the Creator may not only consciously maintain these "natural powers" for our use, but also use them for himself.

There is one exception to this statement that the Creator may use, as well as furnish, our "natural powers." It is this: Such of these powers as are used only as we will are powers which the Creator has put it out of his hands to use, except with our consent. That is to say, that *our will is our own action*; and that which only we can do cannot be employed by the Creator *unless we consent to act with him*. Hence, for example, the *attention* we give to our sensations, in order that we may have definite perceptions, and which we give to comparing these and forming judgments whereupon emotions are aroused in us, is our own voluntary act. The *intentions* which are formed by selection of motives are also purely our personal act; and the carrying out of these intentions, which

is *determination*, belongs to the same class. Attention, intention, and determination in any person are his own acts which are uses of his created powers, and render him conscious of those powers. Hence, it is correct to say that while the Creator's action provides our natural powers he cannot determine their use *without our consent*. Assuming, however, that a man consents to the use of his powers by the Creator, there is no ground nor datum upon which anyone can say it is impossible, impracticable, improbable, or irrational that, upon fit occasion, they should be so used.

It is quite apparent, also, that the Creator's reasoning, devotement, sympathy, and energy, when employing the natural power, or faculty, of any man as an instrument, *must render that man conscious of them*. They must become self-conscious in that man as certainly and definitely as though they were his own acts, because of his consent. God's conscious perceiving, reasoning, wishing, loving, intending, determining must develop in the consciousness of the man. This is just as natural and inevitable as it is that the forms of human consciousness develop by man's own use of his powers.

Hence, it must be clear, also, that the human choice which consents to this divine action with him will maintain a clear discrimination of the divine consciousness through all its development in him. Now, we do not say that the divine consciousness becomes a unit with the human consciousness; nor say what the two, as self-discriminated, may hold in common. This would be to attempt what we distinctly regard as beyond our penetration. But we do say that there is no ground whatever for skepticism regarding the possibility or probability of the Creator's expressing his thought, intention, wish, or will from the same point in man's nature at which he main-

tains the conditions upon which arise man's consciousness of self-determination. Nor is there ground for denying that such expression by the Creator is the using of the nature of a human being; that such use must be conditioned upon the consent of such human being; that such conceded use must render that human being conscious of the divine perception, thought, intention, love, or energy thus expressed through him; or that this condition, namely, the man's consent, must maintain in his own consciousness a discrimination of what in him is divine and what human.

Possibly some may assert that creative action in us has not created the conditions of any forms of human consciousness other or higher than what men usually develop. How can we know that? Our only means of knowing what powers are conditioned in us is in becoming conscious of our powers by exercising them. Until exercised they are unknown to us. We can affirm what we have consciously acted upon, but can neither affirm nor deny what our action has not, as yet, developed to consciousness. In his present animalism it is a marvel and mystery that man should develop the higher modes of rational consciousness. Why man should transcend the brute which is conscious of sensation, perception, comparison, and volition, and yet does not become conscious of logic nor moral sense, is as mysterious to us as that a sinless man should experience the divine personality self-conscious within him. No man is in a position to deny that any human being who, in the clearness and correctness of his created nature, carries forward his self-determination in harmonious interaction with his Creator may not develop the conditions within him upon which his Creator might disclose the divine consciousness.

Since the various forms of human consciousness are

not developed at once, but gradually and by use, it is easy to understand that the divine consciousness would arise in Jesus only as he should become the instrument of divine action of various kinds and degrees. Hence, to think upon the subject intelligently is to think of Jesus as a created, sinless human being who consented, or yielded himself, to be the instrument of the Creator's personal revelation to men. Although he was created for this mission, yet he was not necessitated to it, but freely "offered himself unto God" to be the interpretation, or expression, of the "Only Begotten," the Creator and Lover of man. It seems clear, then, that the Creator gradually disclosed himself in Jesus, in the process of revealing his love to man.

Jesus, thus gradually becoming conscious of the divine consciousness, *gradually developed the effect* upon himself of that God-consciousness. He spake, acted, and endured as God, although he continued to often speak, act, and suffer as a man, yet recognizing the divine "Sonship" when speaking as God.

The gospel records note this effect from time to time. His own professions and doings plainly evinced that graduality of this development. At the age of twelve he showed divine perceptions to the doctors in the temple, and was conscious that he was "about his Father's business." In his baptism he publicly professed to be set apart to the Messianic mission; professed his consent, as a man, to be used as the medium of special divine ministrations.

This man, Jesus, conscious now that he had "offered himself unto God" to be his instrument of personal communication to men, sought a period of isolation wherein, for forty days of fasting and prayer, he reassured his faith and settled himself in adjustment to this unique



and exalted capacity. In this peculiar relation to God peculiar temptations must have beset him, but these were met and repelled by that unswerving faith which was the perfect subservience of his actual self to the promptings and behests of that Messianic ideal which was gradually disclosed to him. To have this ideal gradually unfolded to him that he might actualize it, "The stable type of ever-moving progress" was his life-scheme—a life which lived upon "every word that proceeded out of the mouth of God." As upon occasion, new advances of divine disclosure arose upon his consciousness new cares and more strenuous tests of his faith pressed upon him. In seasons of solitude and prayer he ever and anon brought himself up to the intent of these new revealments. As he went forward and demonstrated them to the world his spirit triumphed and rejoiced in the achievement. We see him thus in what has been termed his "mediatorial prayer" (John 17), rejoicing in such harmony of divine and human consciousness that he speaks as the "Eternal Son" who had completed his earthly ministry. The complete and rapturous appropriation of the human by the divine nature seems the grand feature of his exaltation. The divine Son exclaims through the human Jesus: "O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

But this does not evince the entire revealment of the Creator and Saviour. It only shows a complete stage, or gradation, in the process of the Creator's revealing himself in the consciousness of Jesus. It is a long psychic distance from this stage to that where he declares to his disciples, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit:

teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Between these widely differing degrees of the divine consciousness in Jesus he manifested definite advances. But a brief time passes after his exultation, because of having finished his ministry, before we find him in Gethsemane weighed down with mental agony. Although the divine Son had definitely and openly prompted him to speak of "the glory he had" with the Father before the world was, now, we are told, he "began to be greatly amazed, and sore troubled." He said to his disciples, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death"; and falling on his face he exclaimed, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me."

Whether Jesus had, upon former occasions when new phases of divine consciousness unfolded in him, experienced such a severe test of his willingness to interpret God, we are not informed in the records. We are told of his many seasons of fasting and prayer, but the circumstantial character of the record, here, leaves no doubt that he was appalled to a degree that tested his devotion to the uttermost. Nor was it simply the immanence of death that terrified him. He had foreknown and spoken with composure of his death as an event which was soon to transpire, but when he began to be conscious of the infinite stress which divine love sustained between its perfect devotion to perfect being with its consequently implacable aversion to sin, on the one hand, and saving benevolence toward sinners, on the other hand, he was amazed and appalled. Its interpretation was more awful than death. It was more agonizing than contemplated crucifixion. He seemed to pause in his great undertaking. But when, by persistent, agonizing prayer, he had

become adjusted to this new evolution of love in him he was able to say, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done."

An unflinching actualization of his ideal as a human instrument of divine revelation marks his course from this point until we find him in the agonies of crucifixion. So complete was the subjection of the human to the divine, and so great had the preponderance of the divine manifestation become, that his human nature seems now actuated but by the divine mind. It seems so because of the perfect surrender of his human will and the sympathy of his human feelings, which seem now wholly preoccupied with interpreting the divine consciousness of *atonement*, rapidly and overwhelmingly unfolding within him. He had told the high priest of his approaching divine sovereignty and glory, having before announced to his disciples that he would lay down his life of himself, and that no man had power to take his life from him; that he held an independent life, and could lay down or take up its human revelation at will. He had told the Roman governor that he would have no power against him except it were given him from above. He permitted the crucifixion to proceed, but he knew that the divine agony of love must reveal itself in him before the cross could cause his physical death. And on the cross he manifested an agony to which he had yielded himself which contrasted strangely and immeasurably with that of the two thieves who were suffering crucifixion beside him, or with the uncomplaining endurance he had previously evinced as "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief."

The words in which he expressed himself, while undergoing this suffering, show :

1. As a man he died faithful to God.
2. He died in and of mental agony.

3. He died forsaken of divine sympathy.

4. If his death were but the martyrdom of a good man it would have contradicted forever the basis of all religion, namely, that the God worshiped responds to, and supports with his sympathy, the true worshiper, especially one who suffers martyrdom for the sake of his religion. The martyrdom theory of Jesus's death would settle the whole question of religion in favor of atheism; since the concededly best of men, dying for his devotion to righteousness, appealed in vain to God for sympathy or support. This certainly closes out completely the liberalistic view of Christ's person and death, namely, that he was but a good man dying as a martyr for his religion. This is another instance of the truth that there is no strictly rational halfway house between atheism and evangelical faith.

5. The only rational conclusion is that this was the revelation of the fact of atonement as it exists in the Creator's attitude, divine love *in its agony of devotion to ideal* being while affording conditions of lenience, salvation, and perfecting to sinners *by extended benevolence*.

It is pertinent, here, to recall a passage in the preceding chapter which recognizes the pathos of the attitude of the Creator. It is as follows: We must recognize divine love as being in that attitude which to human love is the very rack of anguish. *And if, in any event, this divine consciousness were expressed through the medium of human nature it must be a revelation of agony.* He had formerly rejoiced in revealing the divine consciousness of truth—rejoiced in exhibitions of divine power in proof of his Christly mission. But now the divine consciousness fills him with a sense of the agony of divine love. That love which is the unit in which perfect holiness and perfect benevolence inhere must endure man's

free perversion of its amenities in order that it may maintain the position in which it can pardon the sinner and help him back to a holy and loving companionship, when he shall voluntarily renounce all sin.

This is the hour of the revelation to man of this helpless divine agony. In the interpretation of this "atoning fact" Jesus derives no relief from it by means of the divine power of prevision which had at other times sustained him. He exclaimed, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Yet he does not waver in his will as the interpreter, the revealer of God's atoning attitude, love's deepest consciousness disclosed to him up to this hour in its evolution, but freely "offers himself unto God." Having said, "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit," he closes the dying agony with the exclamation, "It is finished!"

Thus in agony he revealed divine love's devotion to the realization of a perfect universe. Thus "he was delivered" to be an exponent of the infinite offense of sin, and to set before men the infinite solicitude for our salvation which divine love endures. Thus he translated the great "atoning fact" into human terms, that it might incite men to salvation by its full revelation of love's ideal life, the unimpaired authority of that ideal, and the beneficent means of its realization; or as he stated it in concrete form, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Thus are the two cardinal conditions to saving faith disclosed in the atoning fact: the infinite benevolence of God, and the infinite crime of sin.

But the evidence that this death is atoning suffering is afforded to man in order that it may effectually reestablish the conditions to human recovery from sin. *The object* of divine revelation to men, we have seen, is to evince that divine benevolence which, although it permits

our race to continue its sinful course, does not renounce holiness, has not surrendered perfect intention, is not lax in its devotion to ideal being, but is at one with holiness and seeks to "lead to repentance." It is to evince that, although mercy affords all but limitless opportunity to evil, it is nevertheless an implacable protest against it, and an infinite motive to sinners to renouncing it; to evince that, upon renunciation of sin, the sinner may find help in divine love to return to purity and companionship with God; and thus evince infinite love and the infinite stigma fixed upon sin by the agonies of Jesus, as motives to man's eternal security in freedom and harmony with an ideal universe. That this divine agony may thus be positively identified to human intelligence as the "atoning fact" in all its phases, its atoning quality, or efficiency, must be demonstrated. In a word, dependent man must find in it the independent basis of salvation.

*The resurrection of Christ is this demonstration.* "He was raised again for our justification"—our proof, or assurance. To Pilate, who had sentenced him to death, to the soldiery, who had executed the sentence, to the priests and mob, at whose behest sentence and execution had been accomplished, his agony seemed but punishment. To some, of more kindly mood, it probably seemed but a pitifully disastrous ending of a noble life. There are those, even now, who regard it as but a martyrdom inflicted by his enemies; and yet others who argue that it was the punishment due him, as a substitute, for the sins of such as a divine predetermination had elected to be saved. But each and all of these views of his death-agony imply a lack of moral quality and of efficiency in the sufferer quite short of that independence which he had professed to his disciples and before Pilate. Nothing but the devotement which can endure (without implying

punishment, disaster, mere martyrdom, or criminal substitution) without impairment of quality or power, until it fully proclaims the infinite offense of sin, and infinite benevolence to the sinner, and thus conditions the ultimate defeat of sin and the triumph of love, can be the atonement. And only the agony incident to such devotion can be correctly termed the agony of atonement. Suffering is an atonement in fact if willingly and successfully endured until the sufferer, unimpaired in character and power, achieves the end which involved his suffering. But the sufferer fails to atone by his sufferings if they imply helpless infliction, correction, or penalty, on account of the cause for which he suffers. The self-sufficiency of the atoning one is disparaged to the extent he is thought conscious of moral weakness, fault, or guilt, correction, or penalty.

It was requisite, therefore, that if the sufferings of Christ were more than the physical pangs of crucifixion, were the revelation of a strain or stress upon the divine consciousness which was expressed in the agony of Jesus—an agony incident to love's unswerving devotion to the perfect, while affording merciful permission of sin's complete self-development—if, in a word, his sufferings revealed the divine "atoning fact"—it was requisite that these sufferings should be clearly exhibited as self-assumed. They must evince that they were not corrective, nor penal sufferings, but were voluntarily accepted with an understanding to achieve a self-proposed end. Hence, his self-submission to this death afforded the utmost human interpretation of divine love's essential agony, and its uncompromising antagonism to sin, but unflinching benevolence to the sinner. His resurrection exhibited that his shame and death had impaired neither his character nor power, nor implied imperfection in his

devotement to perfection of being; but that they stood out as a self-imposed and successful interpretation to the world of the holiness and benevolence of a love which endures unimpaired that it may "save to the uttermost." His resurrection declared that his sufferings were for neither correction nor punishment, but atonement. Raised from the dead, his moral attitude and quality unimpaired, his power undiminished, he demonstrated that atonement as a fact in God was now truly and fully revealed to men. He is in an attitude now to justify moral recovery, spiritual purifying to the world.

The divine agony evinces that perfect holiness and benevolence are one and never separable in love's ideal universe. This divine agony, interpreted to men in the sufferings of Christ, makes the divine benevolence evident as a motive to holiness in men. The divine lenience, instead of intending opportunity and encouragement to evil, is reinstalled in the consciousness of men as loving forbearance which "leadeth to repentance." The *incompatibility* of benevolence from a holy Creator toward a world of the wicked and vile is explained by the agony of love. The way back from guilt and moral degradation is cleared, and every sinner may "come boldly to the throne of grace."

Enough, perhaps, has been presented to clearly set out the atonement as revealed in Christ. It is, doubtless, clear that this is not a "satisfactionist theory," nor a "moral influence theory," nor a "commercial theory." Nor is it the "governmental theory" in the ordinary sense of that title. But it is a governmental theory in the sense of *an ideal family government*. Hence, if we term it a theory at all, it is the *parental theory*. But above all it is the atoning fact, the agony of love in the Creator, which he endures because he will falter neither in the



perfect determination of benevolence nor in perfect devotion to the holy; because, in a word, his nature is love, eternal devotement to the perfect—in which perfect holiness and benevolence are at one—at any cost. Hence, love's implacable aversion to evil; hence, love's agony because of the existence, demonstration, and woe of evil; hence, the infinite offense against love which that agony discloses fixes upon sin the stigma of infinite turpitude; hence, love declares in the atonement two cardinal facts: *infinite mercy to sinners*, and *infinite protest against sin*. All sinners may receive the first, who in their hearts acknowledge the second; and this is to "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

That love which is the nature of independent action in the self-determination of the infinite ego, and projects an ideal universe, discloses in the atonement its independent ability and purpose to maintain the conditions upon which a free but sinning world can cast off sin and achieve eternal security in free companionship with God. By enduring unimpaired, unimpaired in character and power, its unspeakable agony it maintains in moral spotlessness its devotement to the realization of its ideal, and maintains its limitless benevolence, however perverted and abused, as affording the means and conditions of that realization; until the free universe shall demonstrate the futility of sin and the independence and remedial excellence of love. Every returning sinner finds the remedy for his past sins and present guilt, not in any compensation he can offer, but in the grace of divine love which endured them—endured unimpaired in holiness and benevolence; and, hence, continues "mighty to save." Every heathen who offers a sincere prayer, or in his heart turns from what he deems evil to what he deems righteous, thereby recognizes and appropriates the

divine mercy ; turns from the actual to the ideal life, from the dependent to the independent. By thus appropriating divine mercy he acts upon the conditions which the divine agony has afforded him ; even though he is ignorant of the historical revelation of that agony in Jesus Christ. The knowledge of that historical revelation would, doubtless, vastly increase the motives to righteousness and exalted character among the heathen ; hence, the reasons for gospel missions among them. But more of this further on. Every soul, whatever his belief, who sincerely deprecates his selfishness and cleaves to conscience implies, in such action, though unwittingly, the authority of the ideal over the actual, and appropriates the "atoning fact."

Thus the "atoning fact" answers the burning question of the universe: Does love realize perfect benevolence and yet maintain the moral authority of the holy? Thus, also, the revelation of the atoning fact in the sufferings of Christ puts man in possession of the full incentive force of both the moral authority of God's perfect holiness and his perfect benevolence. The obscured natural implications are, in Christ, personally declared to man.

The mutual subsistence in love of moral purity and the perfect carrying out of benevolence cannot be thought without implying the agony of love. Nor can atonement be thought a reality, except as that action which continues true to the perfect throughout the conditions and abuses of a free universe. And, in disclosing to man this awful dominance of the ideal, love reveals its independent self-sufficiency as the projector and upholder of a free universe who is at once holy and perfectly benevolent.

This revelation of independence and unswerving devotion to the ideal, the true, furnishes man with the con-

sciousness of (1) God's devotion to perfection of being; (2) assures him of the presence of a love that is equal to the renovation and perfecting of the universe; and (3) imposes upon his conscience the absolute moral authority of this revealed criterion. By the first this action enables the world to discriminate its sin; by the second, exhibits the opportunity and power for righteousness; and by the third, "sets judgment in the earth."

Moreover, this atoning action evinces the ever-extending arms of divine benevolence, beckoning and wooing sinners, able and willing to save all. Thus is revealed in Christ the divine attitude, which is the real "mercy seat," with its awful agony, the real "blood of sprinkling." Acceptance of these by the sinner is that faith which subjects his actual to an ideal life. The sin-burdened soul, saying, "I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ," finds here the "throne of grace."

## CHAPTER VI

### ESCHATOLOGY

And they shall become one flock, one shepherd. . . . And they shall never perish.—*Jesus*.

ESCHATOLOGY, the doctrine of "last things," is a term which has generally been applied to the events which are expected to mark the ending of human affairs on earth, and the establishing a fixed destiny for all dependent persons. Our use of the term, however, can apply only to certain states of personal development which will characterize what we have termed the ideal, or perfect, universe. The perfect universe is the goal of love's evolution in its present cycle; but we contemplate that perfection not as a fixed end, or state, but as a perfected equipment for future, ever-advancing cycles of personal progress—the disembarrassed companionship of finite persons with the Infinite Person.

This perfect equipment will be the outcome of forces which are now in operation, the final resolution of questions which are now in process of being determined; and, hence, our eschatology is made up of the corollaries of this resolution. It does not threaten an arbitrary intervention of almighty power to reward friends and punish enemies in a special or extra-vengeful sense. It is the sum of results which will have been determined by the personal universe upon the conditions evolved by love. All-conditioning love is no respecter of persons.

Our planet, the earth, is, of course, a small affair in the world of quantities, and our race may be but a small company in the universe of persons. But our planetary life signifies this much, at least: it is a form of the lowest

conditions to the origin and development of personal creatures. How long the planet will continue to serve that purpose, and whether its functions will undergo a change, or have an end, must be a matter of speculation in the absence of a definite revelation. But this much seems clear: our race will continue this earthly life until the final crisis, which is stated in the chapter "The Solution of Evil," is reached; when, on the one hand, racial and social abuses will have been corrected by the progress which will result from faith and love; and when, on the other hand, physical and social retribution will have destroyed the uncorrected and incorrigible elements of earthly society.

Moreover, the crisis passed, such will be the common consciousness of love's excellence and of the turpitude of evil that the lower tutelage of race conditions will be wholly superseded. Their flesh-and-blood form will be superfluous and, unable to contribute anything to the perfecting of personal life, will disappear. Whether this disappearance will be gradual, by the process of racial retribution in physical death, or a sudden and simultaneous transformation of all then upon the earth, is a question of *mode*, and, hence, is a mystery which may be a matter of revelation; but the *fact* is implied in the evolution of love.

The faithful persons thus changed—probably "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"—will join "the goodly company" who, like them, have attained to the common consciousness of universal companionship with God. When race conditions are thus cast off we shall, probably, have no use for the planet, at least in its present state.

There still lingers, however, a suggestion that the planet may continue, in some form, to be a theater of

interest to human spirits. This suggestion arises from the interest in the complete solution of evil which only members of the human race may have in common. The forms in which the persistence of faith and the final self-defeat of evil shall be accomplished by our race may give its members a planetary grouping until each individual shall have entered upon the full consciousness of the perfect, universal companionship, or shall have sunken into the complete isolation of selfishness. However this may be, the utter self-defeat of evil, the persistence of faith and love, and the resultant ideal universe abide *as the essential eschatology of love's evolution*. In whatever grouping the sometime members of the human race may find themselves they are, nevertheless, factors in this mighty problem, and their several destinies are corollaries of its solution.

*Individual destiny* is the question which stands highest in our hopes and sinks deepest in our fears. This, because of natural, rightful self-love. Where, or in what conditions, does the solution of evil place each person concerned with it? This ground has virtually been surveyed in "The Solution of Evil," hence we need only sum up here the results there reached.

Four general classes comprehend all the members of our race: the innocent, the faithful, the selfish, and the incorrigible, or incorrigibly selfish.

*The innocent* include, first, idiots and infants. Their innocence is not moral, but natural, like the innocence of a bird or a lamb. If they have never exercised self-determination they have not attained to individual self-consciousness. They are persons only in the sense of a bundle of personal conditions. Their life has not been one of self-determined personality, but merely the spontaneity of race conditions. Hence, physical death, which

is merely racial retribution, the dissolution of race conditions, must, so far as we can affirm, without a revelation on the subject, end their being. As to the idiotic, this statement applies only to those who are wholly so. There are some classed as idiotic who are but partially so unfortunate, but who are consciously self-determining. Yet their self-determination is exercised upon such distorted conditions that they do not discriminate moral motives. Although they have, by self-determination, attained positive personality they must be classed as innocent persons who will survive physical death, relieved of the physical organism which occasioned their idiocy. Again, some of the idiotic have evinced moral discrimination, and developed positive moral qualities, and, hence, according to their moral determination must be classed with either the faithful or the selfish.

There are tribes of men who, we are told, scarcely evince moral discrimination. Excepting a few individuals among them, they seem to have no personal determination, manifest none but racial qualities, and herd or mate from force of merely race conditions. Their selfishness is not more positive than the spontaneity of race instincts, nor is their sincerity distinguishable from the simplicity of natural impulse. If this is a true representation their personal existence must be thought to end with the collapse of race conditions in physical death. But we are prone to discredit these representations, and to believe them rather hasty conclusions affected by laying undue importance upon external culture as concerned in moral character. The elements of moral character are not largely derived from external culture, but chiefly from intuitional facts; they are born in us, hence are of that class of knowledge which we *do not learn*; untaught, or intuitional, knowledge. And, since they are intuitive,

they are universal; as a rule, all men have them. And for the same reason they are uniform in all men. Since innocence and guilt, piety and impiety, arise from internal elements and outer universals which in no way depend upon external culture, it is easy to underestimate the moral discrimination and strength of the uncultured. The morbid "animalism" which they derive from the degradation of racial and social conditions which ancient idolatries have imposed upon them doubtless renders gross and dull the spiritual perceptions; insomuch that they do not personally transcend infantile or idiotic conditions until much later in life than is the case among enlightened peoples. Hence, a larger proportion of them will probably perish with the dissolution of physical conditions.

Many individuals, not idiots nor infants, who seem never to exercise any considerable degree of self-determination may be found in all tribes of men. Their physical death must be thought as either a passing into the future state of infantile innocence, or as having sunken in personal consciousness to the level of merely race conditions, or as perishing in physical dissolution.

The less ignorant, who practice self-determination in very crude conditions, as the masses of the heathen world for example, may develop a feeble flame, emitting no light, but evincing life, like a wick of "smoking flax." They nurse within them a faith in something upon which they persistently depend, as God. It is a something in which they hope for better conditions; something which they invoke in the hour of trouble, or suffering, or death; something for which, indeed, some of them are willing to suffer or die. In such crude conditions, renouncing selfishness, they attain to harmony with all-conditioning love, either as innocent or as positively faithful.

Children and all of any age, in all lands, who have



exercised personal determination in any degree, have attained individual personality, but have not sufficient intelligence to have intentionally chosen selfishness, as such, will survive physical death as innocent persons. We have stated substantially in "The Solution of Evil": After self-determining action is once begun, however faintly, the personal nature is individualized, and individual self-consciousness takes its rise and retains its personal identity through all subsequent changes until, by self-determined abuse of the personal nature, it may be sunken in complete self-limitation and thus, ultimately, lost. The rise and earlier development of personality is, doubtless, in accordance with circumstances, and the instinctive impulses upon which it proceeds may have been depraved by ancestral and social influences. Its debased racial conditions may impose upon it disease, defective physical organization, feebleness, or early death; and social surroundings may afford it little but villainous incitements. Yet, the implicit sincerity with which it personally acts in accordance with these conditions is an innocent, yes, virtuous, use of its personal nature, and determines its character as one of pure intention. Not until it is sufficiently advanced to deliberately and of purpose reject pure intention and adopt selfish intention does it abuse its personal conditions or form corrupt character. Hence, if physical death overtake it while in this character of personal innocence, it must be thought to persist in a future state as an innocent person of morally pure intentions.

All of any age, in all lands, who have exercised personal determination in any degree, but have not sufficient mental development to have chosen wickedness, as such, are innocent and in essential harmony with divine love. They take rank with that class of beings whose

further development will be in the absence of temptation, who "do always behold the face" of God. They must depend upon environment for consciousness of moral steadfastness, or security, until self-conscious security is acquired *by association* with those whose security has been self-determined "through much tribulation."

*The faithful*—or the overcomers—we term the class which comprehends both those who have attained steadfast security in faith and love and all who, even through much of failure and wavering, still persist in the endeavor of self conquest; as also those who, while advancing in the consciousness of an ever-widening horizon of knowledge and trial, ascend to high altitudes of faith, realizing deeper harmony and enlarging freedom, attain entire security in conversance with love's motives, sympathies, and spirit. From the weakest craft which rocks on the sea of life, but bears for the same port to which the erect and steady steamer points her prow, there floats the ensign of "The Faithful."

"Him that overcometh!" Those persons who, by that faith which subjects the actual to the ideal life, have overcome their susceptibility to selfishness will have determined themselves in harmony with divine love to a degree which renders their companionship with God self-persistent. They need no objective demonstration of the failure of evil, need no removal from objective motives to sin. They have canceled selfishness by faith. Their faith has overcome the world in its sinful power and splendor. When wickedness "did abound" their love did not grow cold. They have determined their largest freedom in moral harmony and perfect security. They have actualized an ideal egoism by practicing an unselfish altruism. Losing their life for love's sake, they have found it. All hail, Overcomers!

But perhaps there are pure persons who have ever dwelt in the environment of unmarred love. They have never known sin, nor a temptation to sin; never, even, a hurtful error. They could, for aught we can see, continue to develop securely under such circumstances. But, as among themselves, they could not experience *self-determined* security. Their susceptibility to a selfish development of self-love, if exposed to temptation, could never be beyond question. Nor can we conceive that their self-determination could, in the absence of discipline by error and temptation, ever attain the widest freedom which is possible to a person whose faith and love and progress have been developed and confirmed amid the strenuous exigencies of virtuous hardship. A securely steadfast and free universe cannot be thought possible, except as self-determined; hence, *the grand nucleus* of a perfect universe must be the "triumphant host" who will have "come out of great tribulation, and have washed their (own) robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may *have the right to the tree of life.*"

In association with this "triumphant host," and witnessing the demonstrated failure of evil, angels who may have hitherto known only conditions of justice, dwelling only in an environment of divine glory, may "desire to look into" and learn such lessons of demonstrated faith and love; and may thus determine in themselves a conscious aversion to selfishness which will be practically equivalent to unsusceptibility.

Children who have passed from human conditions, too early for human temptation or probation, into the conditions and associations of the blessed, dwelling ever in the environment of overmastering incitements to love, will also attain, by association with self-determined

saints, to the same transcendent security which is realized by the faithful in their self-determined unsusceptibility to selfishness. To afford to these pure but undeveloped ones the means of determining a self-conscious security, as against possible selfishness, something is requisite. That requisite is in the objective incitement afforded by association with the self-determined security, and the intimate harmony which are evinced in the wide freedom of the faithful; and also in that universal consciousness which results from the persistence of love and the self-defeat of sin.

This we deem the true solution of the relation of all persons who in innocence pass, by death, from this world's environment or temptation without having attained to steadfast self-adjustment to moral conditions. This includes not only deceased children, but many of maturer years who have attained conscious, individual personality, but who, because of extreme ignorance, natural stupidity, or other defective conditions, may have never consciously determined for or against a life of faith.

But the discipline of error and temptation, such as human life, here, is intended to afford, is essential to the development of that subjective aversion to selfish motives which, along with confirmed faith, establishes the consciousness of eternal security in finite persons. Hence, that consciousness of security could never be attained if, like infants and imbeciles, or possibly angels, *all* finite persons were to determine their characters amid that immaculate environment which we term Heaven. Hence, the struggle of human life, so far as it is a struggle with temptations, ignorance, and weakness, is only that disciplinary process without which a perfectly secure universe could never be attained. And when once sin has arisen this struggle must include the demonstration

of faith and love, as against sin, in order to achieve ultimate security. Consequently, individuals who, from any cause, miss the probation of error and its incident temptations, do not belong to the securely self-determined universe, but must rise from their mere innocence to self-conscious security by determining their characters with reference to the universal *public consciousness* which has been established by the faithful who have wrought out the practical solution of evil.

Remember that the development of securely pure character is but the correction and discipline of self-love in devotion to self-perfection, in harmony with the perfection of others. Remember that this devotion is complete susceptibility to the ideal, the true, the perfect. Remember that as devotion to a great end it precludes devotion to the pleasurable satisfaction of means—that is, precludes selfishness. Remember that the rise and self-defeat of selfishness have stripped it of all plausible illusions, exposed it as infinite crime, and abolished its objective motivity. Remember that devotion to the realization of perfect being is the established ambition, the enthusiastic public sentiment of the faithful, established upon their faith and determined by their love. This intimate companionship with God, and the steadfast purity and all but boundless freedom of their spontaneity, are but the exponents of a pure self-love rendered unsusceptible to selfishness by their devotion to perfection of being. Remembering these things it will be easy to see that innocent persons, developing in the midst of such associations, must readily mature a self-love which is wholly in harmony with these associations. The sentiment and activities of a universal life which results from the demonstration of love's perfection and sin's infinite failure and shame render the temptation to evil impossible. That

question has been settled forever. Hence, it is clear that these innocent but undeveloped persons must develop a like unsusceptibility to selfishness and a like devotion to the perfection of their personal being.

Security in devotion to self-perfection is the only apparent object of probation; and since this devotion may be attained by innocent persons when associated with the faithful, we can see no occasion for a "future probation" for children or innocent heathen. Unless we accommodate the term "probation" to mean this progressive development of the innocent in association with the faithful there appears no standing ground for the supposition termed "future probation." Failure of the innocent to develop the highest susceptibility to love and all its qualities, and aversion to selfishness in such an environment is inconceivable. To obliterate the liability of their self-love to perversion is to establish their perpetual moral harmony. Hence, to secure this obliteration is the only significance of probation. There could be no occasion for a probation, no liability of self-love to selfishness, if persons could be created with a ready-made experience that love is perfect action, that its ideals are essential truth, that the realization of its ideals is the highest good; and, on the contrary, that selfishness is demonstrably infinite folly and turpitude, an object of universal aversion and contempt. But in a community which is a demonstrated result of all these facts a supposed probation is equally superfluous. Knowledge of the infinite infamy of selfishness, the self-sustained persistence of love, and the actual and evident strength and freedom of the faithful constitute the conditions afforded by the civilization in the midst of which the faith of these innocent persons is exercised. Constant fellowship with such transcendent type of society incites and informs their

self-love, and leads it up from the consciousness of security from sin, by means of association, to the consciousness of self-determined security.

*Future punishment* of the selfish is simply the self-defeat of uncorrected evil. As this self-defeat has been outlined in "The Solution of Evil" we need only consider, here, its main aspects. These are the fact, the mode, and the duration of the perishing agony.

In much of the theological discussion of this subject these questions have been strangely mixed. Affirming future punishment as a positive infliction of special torture by divine resentment, biblical expressions which employ accommodated language to express the effect upon man of his right or wrong adjustment toward the changeless nature and invariable action of God have been construed in the most literal sense. Whether representing God as in the petulant mood of ranting fury toward the wicked, or in the ridiculous attitude of spewing the lukewarm out of his mouth, this method of interpretation is alike crude and absurd. In the same way it affirms the fact, mode, and duration of the catastrophe of sin as an eternal fit of divine choler in process of irate satisfaction.

The theological revulsion from these teachings has been equally indiscriminating. Stumbling at such views of the *mode*, it has blindly denied the *fact* and *duration* of final retribution. While the former view exhibits God as a raging and pitiless tyrant, the latter implies he is a doting imbecile. The average religious character induced by these views in those who have accepted them has generally evinced narrow though virtuous severity in the one case, easy-going sentimentality in the other.

*The Fact.*—Insomuch as the all-conditioning love of God maintains the conditions to human innocence, faith,

and love, whether by natural or supernatural methods, or both, selfish determination rejects the object of these conditions, perverts the conditions in their use, and, hence, limits and degrades the person who so determines himself. Whoever perishes does so by his own act. All who appropriate the conditions to faith "wash their robes"; that is to say, they use the means which God in his mercy has placed in and around them and purify their characters and are saved. All who reject and pervert them "defile themselves" and are lost. Having arrived at a state sufficiently mature to reject righteousness, as such, they drop away, by physical death, from these conditions to faith and love, and thus lose contact with the means through which their harmony with divine love might have been determined. Their self-determined persistence in selfishness is their self-defeat. Their characters are deliberately self-determined selfishness, and consequently the intervention of physical death removes them hence in uncorrected sin. Dying without having actualized their quasi expectation to "sometime," as a matter of convenience, turn to repentance and faith, they must be thought to have entered upon a future state of retribution. Obdurately impenitent while enjoying immunity from retribution, their quasi intention to reform at some convenient time is only a selfish forecast which can never be capable of heartfelt faith. It is simply a form of moral incorrigibility.

We have seen that love, in creating dependent persons, requires that the rise of their personality must be conditioned at the lowest point at which progressive self-determination is possible. Now, if this racial and social life affords the lowest and easiest conditions which all-conditioning love can posit for the rise, progress, and perfecting of finite persons, then the debasement of indi-



vidual life in these conditions must be thought such as to be totally unsusceptible to any conditions to personal improvement which love can afford. To those who have perverted and debased these lowest conditions of personal development physical death must be thought a change which renders them conscious of conditions quite hopeless. By no line of reasoning can we conclude that the abuse of our present nature can result in an improved nature which shall be more susceptible to corrective faith. And if individuals continue to debase *earthly* conditions, which are most favorable to progressive motives, perverting them from the moral susceptibility of childhood innocence to self-determined depravity, death must be to them a change to a more radical and hopeless maladjustment toward love and God.

*The mode* of future penalty is expressed in "The sinking of personality," which is outlined in "The Solution of Evil." The consciousness of disharmony with the conditions of his personality, and the absence of an environment which can minister to his morbid desires, must make it a situation of unrelieved despair to the lost soul. In his earthly life he had given morbid development to affections for merely social gratification; had determined himself upon the assumption that *this* life is the whole of his being, and gave to it his chief devotement. This practical infidelity to his personal being not only rendered his race affections morbid and brutelike, and ignored or perverted his spiritual nature, but acquired a false, ungodly, vicious, personal character. He is not only unsusceptible to godly motives, but, to the extent his personality is determined, he impersonates aversion to the qualities and motives of love-determined life; and to the extent there may continue with him objective scope or incitement to evil he is an active antagonist of

love. Having lost, by physical death, the facilities for selfish gratification which racial conditions and perverted social life had afforded; even having lost the scope for objective antagonism toward love, lost all objective motives to evil, he is now a morbid energy destitute of those sources of satisfaction. He is now insatiate, appalled, tormented by the utter absence of external motives to sin, by the eternal failure of external scope in which to exercise his wicked self-determination, and by the reaction, retribution, of all-conditioning love, "the wrath of God."

Even Satan, who, according to the sacred writings, was first to sin and has maintained incorrigible character, as well as active antagonism, will ultimately find himself *without a field of objective activity*. His self-determined persistence as the leader of evil, doubtless, marks him as the farthest advanced and most completely determined evil force in the universe. Our information of his history is confined to the Bible, but is altogether too meager to authorize an opinion as to how great were his original powers, or how wide has been the scope of his activities. Yet some things seem clearly taught or plainly inferable: First, that he is the person who first perverted the good elements of his original, God-given nature, and thereby became the first of sinners—whence his name, Devil—the impersonation of the origin of evil. (See "The Genesis of Evil," Part II, Chapter II.) Secondly, that his powers, either by his Creator's original endowment or his own personal development, must have been exceeding great and influential when he revolted against God. Thirdly, owing to the high order of his intellectual grasp, his influence, and his powers for evil exploitation, there could be no place for honest repentance in his case; hence, he and those who were influenced by him must

have been virtually incorrigible in the very first move of their revolt. Fourthly, that he has had resource—which moral freedom, combined with his intellectual grasp and spiritual force, gave him—by which he was well able to make argument with the Creator seems quite evident from various scriptures. Especially among these may be cited the demoniacal phenomena which confronted Christ and battled with him on many a psychic field. But just what class of conditions must have obtained among men to give him and his associates a footing as factors in human affairs we cannot decide. Nor whether in the general contest between him and his Creator—in *which divine love must permit the full demonstration of selfishness as a source of pleasure and power*—it became unavoidable to permit the contest to be waged against the “Second Adam,” to test whether or not love can make a success of a free universe, we can neither affirm nor deny. But this much seems clear: He is the first, ablest, most resourceful, and most persistent antagonist of the evolution of love.

His personal activities among men seem, according to biblical data, to have been but occasional shifting of a conflict raging in other spheres as the evolution of divine love advanced and its mighty drama flung its plot athwart our world. But as the great problem finds ultimate solution, and love, untarnished and unimpaired in its power to uphold the conditions of a perfect universe, shall see the last element of evil motivity go out in shame and everlasting contempt, Satan will, by sheer lack of objective motive, find no resort but a subjective life, false through and through, and in its self-accusing, retributive reaction a veritable “bottomless pit.” His effort to prove that selfishness is capable of greater pleasure and power than is love—an effort in which he had pitted his self-

determined selfishness against the divine nature—has now played its last move, and failed, amid the triumphant splendors of a redeemed universe and the reproaches of his deceived adherents. The evolution of love has fortified self-love against selfishness and reassured the universe against moral defection. It has done this by developing a universal consciousness of the infinite resourcefulness of love for exhaustless good, and of the exhausted resources, the worthlessness and infinite demerit, of selfishness. On its merits it has outlasted all opposition, has answered every question, solved every problem, lived down every abuse, and worn out and closed out every remnant of evil motivity. And now the raging, implacable hater of love is totally stranded as to sea-room for further evil activity or motive, and turns upon himself to witness the retributive process of a sinking personality which may require ages upon ages to complete. And O, horror of horrors! To this perishing process he is now shut in, incapable of repentance, within the embrace of that love against whose every sentiment, quality, and purpose he has through centuries determined in himself a fixed and horrid aversion.

Prophet, poet, and teacher have thrown around these realities much of imagery to picture to our minds the dreadful nature of this catastrophe. Some have sought to render them more horrible by materialistic interpretation, but our object is simply to trace the main facts which are implied in personal being. The elements of our God-given personal nature which we have incorporated into our personality, and made our own in perverted use, may give us greater agony in their reactive, retributive process than would the stress and strain and burning by externally applied tortures. Love is the most intense

flame ever kindled—hot enough to fuse and crystallize the harmonies of an immortal universe, and persistent enough to consume the dross of selfish ages.

Ah, Love! Love! Stainless life of God! Man's will  
 Alone avails to mar thy universe!  
 Still lov'st thou man!—though he, by chosen ill,  
 His self-perversive selfishness doth nurse!  
 Ever thy blessing turns he to a curse!  
 Till, fixed in Self's insensate hate of God,  
 To him a torment is love's sweetest verse.  
 Thy flame burns on, as on the ages plod,  
 But seems in sin's perverted realm, the wrath of  
 God.

The mode of final retribution is not definitely described in the Scriptures; hence, different views are held by those who accept them as containing supernatural revelations regarding the mode: First, that it consists of eternal consciousness of misery, or torment. Secondly, that as the tendency of sinful life is seen, in this world, to be self-limiting to personality, it will in the future world result in final extinction of the personal consciousness of the sinner; and so, be eternal.

While this book does not aim to comment upon the biblical teachings, but is a proposed system of self-sustaining philosophy, it has toward the Scriptures in many instances the relation of an organon by which to interpret or understand biblical data. Hence, we do not hesitate to say that *The Evolution of Love* sustains the second above-stated view. Perhaps the statements of the Bible may be interpreted by the first view, but more clearly and certainly, we think, by the second. But the fact of eternally irrevocable retribution is the obvious teaching of these sacred writings, conspicuously and unflinchingly the teaching of Christ, although there is difference of opinion among Christians as to mode.

The view which the evolution of love supports is not,

as some might hastily assume, identical with *annihilationism*, but is the *self-sinking of personality*. Annihilationism assumes that divine force will intervene to blot out the existence of wicked persons. If the reader has learned the main teaching of the philosophy unfolded in this book he has seen that one of the cardinal principles involved is that divine force cannot be invoked to inflict punishment for offenses of character. In a world of persons the formation of character is free. Our Creator and Redeemer affords the conditions upon which persons act and form their characters, but the forming, the determining of the qualities which make up their character is, and can only be, their own individual work. And the consequences upon themselves of their own action is the retribution which divine love must permit them to suffer; because it cannot intervene to save them against their will. Hence, the perishing of the sinner which we have set forth as the necessary method is not arbitrarily inflicted by the intervention of divine force, but is the necessary outcome of certain invincible facts—for example: 1. The disappearance, or obliteration, of all objective inducement to evil in the universal environment. 2. The accumulation of inner limitations which result from sinful life and must ultimately abolish the entire scope of personal freedom; so that he must lose consciousness of self-determined personality. 3. And, as stated elsewhere, all-conditioning love cannot be thought to continue the personal nature, holding it in conscious torture after the consciousness of personal determination and responsibility is lost. This we repeat, is not annihilationism, but the *self-sinking of personality, eternal penalty*.

*The duration* of personal retribution must be thought as final, forever. Different degrees of personal depravity

must result from difference in the degrees of definiteness with which different persons recognize and abuse the conditions to faith and love. Hence, among the selfish there must result different grades of personal development with selfish intention, and correspondingly different degrees of turpitude and ill-desert. Everything which enters into motivity, whether of inner susceptibility or outer incentive, affords occasion for the exercise of personal determination, and according to this motivity does personality make itself positive and persistent. And according to the magnitude, so to speak, of the motivity to righteousness is the degree of his turpitude who sins against it. This accords with the general principle that the merit or demerit of any personal act, good or bad, is in proportion to the magnitude of opposing influences.

It is obvious, then, that according to the *degree* of motivity three things are equally determined in the lost sinner, namely: *the persistence of personal consciousness, the degree of turpitude, and the measure of ill desert.* The agony of perishing, therefore, will be graduated in both intensity and duration by the individual self-determination of the lost. "And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." "But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes." The self-wrought catastrophe of selfishness will not be more terrible than its own antagonism to divine love shall make it, nor more bitter than its own self-induced aversion to that love which will condition its despair. "If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there!"

"How long the process of the sinking of personality may continue is a question which we have no exact data from which to answer. The relative persistence of different persons in the agony of perishing by self-limitation

is implied in the nature of personality. One's personal self-consciousness must be thought persistent in proportion as his selfish purpose is definitely determined. Hence, selfish personality, in its most elaborate determination, may be expected to cling to its purpose longest, and therefore persist longest in the agony of the perishing process. 'He shall be beaten with many stripes.' But all-conditioning love cannot be affirmed to continue the personal nature in conscious torture after the consciousness of self-determination is lost." (See "The Solution of Evil," Part II, Chapter III.)

Thus the evolution of love affords the realization of an harmonious universe by (1) the self-determined security of the faithful, (2) the conditioning the innocent in the society of the faithful, (3) the lapse of non-determined natures, and (4) the sunken personality of the obdurate. The ground, in the universal consciousness, having been cleared of all questioning of love as perfect action, and as the perfect adjustment of being, *the moral possibility of any falling away of the innocent or faithful is forever transcended*, in the presence of infinite motives to love and the total absence of selfish incentive.

*The harmonized universe* will become a matter of universal consciousness. We emphasize that this state of self-secured freedom and harmony will be known by all as the self-determined universe. The evolution of love implies it as an object; and it is the outcome of the solution of evil. Hence, in this respect at least, the personal universe is destined to be one community.

This is the perfected equipment for future, ever-advancing cycles of personal progress. Whether it has been for our race, alone, or for the universe, the solution of evil, incident to the evolution of love, must establish an all-



pervading consciousness which will afford new conditions to personal development—conditions in the midst of which innocent, though inexperienced, millions may be created without dread of their defection. They may be safely launched upon a life of personal freedom, created in higher types, perhaps the highest type of intelligence and power which it is possible to create.

The need of planetary, racial, or physical conditions of any kind may be wholly superseded. The self-determined harmony and security of a personal world or universe having been established, like the foundation walls of a majestic temple, there will be no further need of "scaffolding from the ground" to carry up the still-ascending superstructure. *The "weak point" of finite personality—self-love's susceptibility to selfishness—is now bridged and buttressed forever.* For aught we can see, the physical orbs will, gradually or simultaneously, disappear. The divine activities which have constituted their phenomena may cease; their splendor "dissolve like the baseless fabric of a dream, and leave not a rack behind." The real, the personal, universe will have been established; and the evolution of love will press on, without a jar to determine the fullness of altruistic perfection.

A new cycle is begun. It is the opening of a new stage of development, upon which the resources of love, now the nature of universal self-determination, may unfold in ever-progressing self-consciousness. Those who under besetment of selfishness had regained the devotement of love, by being "faithful in a few things," are now equipped to be "rulers over many." It is the dawn of eternity's "golden age," the undisturbed interaction and companionship of finite and infinite, the enlarged condition and opportunity of, perhaps, hitherto unexploited creative energies.

“For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that ye may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled unto all the fullness of God.”

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